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THE DECLINE OF ARISTOCRACY

BY

ARTHUR PONSONBY, M.P.

AUTHOR OF

"THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE'S EYE

"Qui sert bien son pays n'a pas besoin d'aïeux."

VOLTAIRE.

T. FISHER UNWIN

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TO

M. E. P.

TO WHOM I OWE

ANYTHING I KNOW THAT IS

WORTH KNOWING

PREFACE

A NUMBER of books have been written on the various aspects of the Rise of Democracy. But so far as I know, writers have avoided dealing directly with a cause which is at the same time a result of the establishment of democratic institutions, namely, the Decline of Aristocracy.

The influences which contribute to any social development and the origin and symptoms of change in the character of a governing authority can only be adequately examined after the lapse of a long interval of time. Perhaps, therefore, it is presumptuous for any one to attempt to analyse the cross-currents of change in his own generation. But the politician is an incorrigible culprit in this respect. He is always watching the signs of the times and the tendencies of opinion, and is frequently tempted to give the public the benefit of his observations. He is a disturber of the peaceful calm of automatic development, more especially when he is a Radical. But he is one of the factors in modern life which help to prevent the growth of man becoming too much like the growth of vegetables.

I am quite aware that the ground covered in

this volume is highly controversial, and therefore extremely difficult to traverse. But the subject dealt with is one that is likely to claim more attention as time goes on. The consequences of a decline in any section of the community are important, and when that section has been the dominant and governing section, the change in its fortunes cannot fail to be a matter of general concern.

I have devoted several chapters to the subject of the early training of boys. From experience and observation I am strongly impressed by the extraordinarily thin veneer of mental and moral instruction which is accepted as education in the upper classes. Although increasing interest is being taken in the question of education in general, the Public School side of the problem receives comparatively little consideration. But it seems to me very pertinent in estimating the causes of failure in the aristocracy of to-day.

I have tried to avoid the indiscriminate abuse of one side and the undiscriminating pretensions of the other side, with both of which I am fairly intimately acquainted. My desire has been not to carp or sneer, but to follow out an argument of direct attack in the light of undisputed facts, though I fully admit I have given my own interpretations of those facts. I have been at pains to avoid any suggestion of personalities or aiming the shaft of criticism against any recognisable individual.

The charge may be made that much of my

criticism is destructive, but I may plead that to give warning of danger is the necessary preliminary to avoiding it; to discover and diagnose a disease is the first essential to curing it. I have outlined suggestions for reform in some directions, but I have no inclination to formulate a cut-and-dried scheme of social reconstruction, which can easily be demolished or proved to be fantastic.

The thesis has many bearings and is wide in scope. I only endeavour briefly to suggest a line of argument so as to present a case for discussion. It would require a historian who was at the same time a sociologist, with close knowledge of the various strata into which our national life is divided up, to make a study that was in any way complete.

By the kind permission of the editor of *The Nation* I am able to use the substance of two or three articles I have contributed at different times to that journal. Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond have kindly read through the MS., and I owe a great deal to their suggestions and to the advice they have given me. I have also had close at hand constant and valuable help from my wife, with whom I have been able to discuss fully each point as it arose.

A. P.

Shulbrede Priory, Sussex,
1912.

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The Decline of Aristocracy

CHAPTER I

ARISTOCRACY

Theory of an aristocracy—The hereditary principle—Social and political power of the aristocracy—Their deterioration — Change in their status — Use of the word "gentleman"—The danger of prejudice—The ideal of democracy—Equality of opportunity—The outlook of the upper class.

ARISTOCRACY in its pure theoretical sense means government by the best, the best being those who are superior both morally and intellectually, and who, therefore, would govern directly in the interests of the governed. But this is a theoretical ideal of ancient Greek philosophers. In practice such an ideal has never been realised, for the simple reason that the best are undiscoverable. The attempt to institute a perfect aristocracy led to government by an oligarchy consisting of a council of nobles, whose claim to rule was founded on the qualification of birth, civic status, and the ownership of land. The danger of an oligarchy is that it may

deteriorate into a plutocracy, the qualification of the possession of wealth being stronger than any other. The theory of government by aristocracy or oligarchy presupposes that there are a mass of people who are inferior by nature and adapted to submission ; in the interests of good government, therefore, the management of affairs should be placed in the hands of the best, however they may be selected. The system established under feudalism was entirely different. Each noble governed in his own particular area, but no sovereign authority was vested in the nobles collectively. The most notable instances in history of States governed by aristocracies are the republics of Venice, of Genoa, and of the Dutch Netherlands, and actually, though not nominally, Great Britain between 1689 and 1832. The aristocracy in this country was primarily one of birth dependent on the occasional ennobling of individuals by the sovereign or his government, at first either as a mark of Court favour or for their public and political services, and subsequently also for their wealth and their adherence to the political party in power.

The vast aristocratical system which came to be organised in the Middle Ages contributed more than any other single cause to consolidate the doctrine of hereditary merit. "For the essence of an aristocracy," as Lecky says, "is to transfer the source of honour from the living to the dead, to make the merits of living men depend not so much upon their own character and actions as

upon the actions and position of their ancestors; and as a great aristocracy is never insulated, as its ramifications penetrate into many spheres, and its social influence modifies all the relations of society the minds of men become insensibly habituated to a standard of judgment from which they would otherwise have recoiled. If in the sphere of religion the rationalistic doctrine of personal merit or demerit should ever completely supersede the theological doctrine of hereditary merit or demerit, the change will, I believe, be largely influenced by the triumph of democratic principles in the sphere of politics." *

The hereditary principle is, indeed, being slowly discarded. If accepted at all, it is justified not so much on the ground of the direct transfer of merit in the succeeding generations of a particular family, as on the assumption that an oligarchy accustomed and educated to perform the duties of government is more likely to produce men well suited for such work than any other class. But if this oligarchy is to cease having the monopoly of political and administrative power even this slender foundation for supporting the hereditary principle will disappear.

The basis of aristocratic government is the negation of liberty, and this is the underlying cause of its ultimate failure.

The word aristocracy is now used almost entirely in its social sense and denotes a class

* "Rise and Influence of Rationalism," vol. i.

of society which consists of the nobility and leisured gentlefolk. No one would pretend that they are either morally, intellectually, or physically the best (ἄριστοι), but it would be a great mistake to suppose that they have entirely lost all powers of government (κρατία). No doubt they have been shorn of a great deal of the supreme power they held before 1832, and most of their privileges have vanished. But the rise of democracy has thrown them almost completely on to the side of one of the two chief political parties in the State, and that party with all its power can, by fighting for their privileges and interests, not only prevent their demolition, but to some extent secure a continuance of their ascendancy. It is quite comprehensible that as a class they should be conservative and desire to leave things as they are. They have no struggle for the means of life, they are quite comfortable, and therefore cannot be expected to be responsive to the demands made for the further growth of institutions and readjustment to altered conditions. Conservatism therefore is an upper-class characteristic, and consequently is a sign of respectability.

Apart from their actual political power, which after all is a mere ghost of what they formerly enjoyed, in the social world they reign supreme, and their supremacy would be maintained here even if they were divorced absolutely from all political power. Aristocracies are apt to think too much of persons and positions to weigh facts

and opinions justly, but there can be no greater error than to dismiss the fact of their social dominance as negligible. In some ways social supremacy is a stronger force than the positive and ostensible powers of legislation and administration. It may even to a large extent vitiate the results of reforming legislation; because true reform is not brought about by the mere passing and imposition of new laws, but by the genuine desire of the mass of the people to assist in carrying out the proposed change. If a reactionary spirit and a conservative habit of mind hold the field to any appreciable degree the results will be barren and nugatory. The social standard that is set of morals, habits, and fashions forms in itself an ideal which a very vast number of people are constantly endeavouring to reach, and whatever may be the laws to which they have to conform, the influence of the social ideal is the main factor in governing their conduct and forming their ambitions. Schoolmasters say that the most vital element in the success and efficiency of a school is its tone, and that this is determined not by school regulations so much as by the character, influence, and habits of the leading boys. So in a State where social life is of such importance as it is in this country, it should be better understood that the leaders of society exercise an influence far in excess of that which the bare numerical strength of their class would justify. Moreover, as landlords and business magnates, they estab-

lish a further direct rule over a large section of the agricultural and industrial population. A series of volumes is now being issued under the title of "The Governing Families of Britain," the word "governing" is significant and by no means wholly inaccurate.

The modern aristocracy, therefore, it will be seen still have some political power, chiefly, though not exclusively, through the party in the State with which they are identified. They have in their corporate capacity practically supreme social power, which we shall have occasion to analyse further, and in their individual capacity they have localised and specialised control given them by their wealth and position.

Aristocrats, however decadent, cannot be abolished any more than anarchists, however dangerous. A student of chemistry who sees an undesirable scum forming on the solution he has under observation knows that the simple removal of the scum will not prevent its reappearance. As a proper expedient he will instil some fresh counteracting ingredient into the mixture.

It is no good whatever suggesting that this class should either be abolished or ignored. Any abrupt upheaval would only lead to a reaction in their favour, and the conservative and reactionary forces in the country, even when in abeyance, are very strong. The aristocracy is, it is true, more or less a class apart, but they are going through a transition stage. They have lost the ancient glories of their past state, and in

their metamorphosis appear to be in doubt as to what are the essential qualities now required of them. There are great signs of deterioration on which we shall have occasion to dwell, but having established the fact that their case is one that calls for examination, we shall find the problems it involves are well worth a good deal of thought and attention.

To attempt to improve this class in the sociological sense would not mean to strengthen them in the class sense. On the contrary, their improvement must entail the acceptance by them of a higher intellectual standard and a healthier moral standard, and the abandonment of the last of the spurious advantages which emanate solely from causes connected with birth and money.

As every general committee elects an executive, so democracy, however complete, will always desire to place some sort of directing and responsible power into the hands of a selected or elected few. The weak will always be ready to subordinate themselves to the protection (not the domination) of the strong. The unskilled will be ready to benefit by the instruction (not the dictation) of the skilled. "The work of government is a form of skilled labour which should be in the hands of those who possess the requisite skill." * The essential qualification in these few is not that they should be of outstanding talent and genius, nor of course that they should be of high social status, but that they should be thoroughly repre-

* "Elements of Politics," Sidgwick.

sentative and so be faithful interpreters, so far as it is humanly possible, of the popular will.

Theirs is a position of trust which they should hold by the active consent of the citizens. If supermen could be deliberately created, or unfailingly discovered, we might be inclined to prefer an aristocratic form of government. If men with the highest mental capacities were the most useful and most helpful to progress, and made the best citizens, then the ideal of an aristocracy of brains might be aimed at. But the one is impossible and the other undesirable. The most intellectual are not fitted for supremacy any more than the most moral, the most noble, or the strongest physically. The qualities required are not to be measured by any mental or physical tests.

There appears to be in human nature an inexplicable tendency to balance defects in one direction by compensation in another direction, and in the long run the unaccountable element of character seems to be the factor which counts the most and inspires the greatest confidence. As this element defies any test we must fall back on selection or election backed by consent. The modern aristocracy as a class having no outstanding qualities, and being entirely unrepresentative, and neither elected nor selected, falls very short of any ideal. The question is whether it is to be ousted and ignored and relegated to the position of exiles like the French nobility, or whether it should be impregnated with a new spirit, and in so far as it obsti-

nately clings to discredited privileges and refuses to assimilate that spirit, checked, and in so far as it absorbs the new spirit, encouraged.

The second would seem to be the wiser course. It is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and it accepts the possibility of the existence of certain elements in the aristocracy, as we find it, that are worth maintaining or worth developing. The expulsion of any class from a share in government even if it were possible is probably undesirable. The countries in which the aristocracy stand aloof from public affairs, and which are left entirely in the hands of the bourgeoisie and selected working-class representatives are not entirely the better for it.

The more intelligent of the aristocracy are themselves the first to admit that political and social developments have materially altered the status and character of their caste. They would deplore an attitude of inertia which would mean drifting to destruction and being absorbed most probably in the first instance by a plutocracy; and they are sensible enough to understand that the call of democracy cannot be ignored and the wave of democracy cannot be repulsed, and that it is futile for them to confine their activities to self-preservation or to clinging to antiquated and obsolete privileges.

A higher and different standard is required of them, and in the interests of the State, as well as in their own interests, they should be assisted in their efforts to join in the work of

national and social progress, not as nominal and privileged leaders, nor as a class apart, but as efficient coadjutors, merged in and assimilated to the whole body of citizens devoted to service of one kind or another. It is useless to go on pretending that they are a superior class, or that there is any justification, social or political, for treating them as a separate and distinct caste. Their aptitude for the work which is allotted to some of them is now in question. They are ready enough to undertake the nominal rôle of manager, director, instructor, or patron. But they must no longer refuse to compete and stand or fall by the measure of merit and worth.

In all fairness it must be admitted that a change in point of view is not only incumbent on them, but also on those who accept their domination and enjoy subservience to a social aristocracy and the comforting protection of a patron and overlord more than the freedom and self-respect that comes from a position of independence. A change of attitude is also to be expected—and in this case its accomplishment will be still more difficult—from the host of aspirants who are devoting their efforts to the task of climbing into the position of leisured ease which seems to have such fatal attractions.

The attention of the country is now being constantly drawn to the great industrial and social problems connected with the workers. Legislation and improved administration is directed towards coping with the problems of destitution,

of poverty, of sickness among the wage-earners, and of improvement in the housing conditions, as well as to factory and mining legislation. The State, in fact, is realising more and more its great responsibilities and becoming alive to the fact that national prosperity and commercial and social well-being depend on the continual relative improvement in the condition of the people. But meanwhile the well-to-do—the employer class, the landlords, the upper class, the nobility, the aristocracy, call them what you will—entirely escape attention. It is accepted generally that they fitly perform the function of the model which others may copy, that they properly set the standard to which the less fortunate may aspire, and that their condition is highly satisfactory, simply because in the material sense they are well off. We cannot investigate their circumstances and inquire into their activities. But the suspicion is growing that our aristocratic model is deteriorating, that our patricians are inadequately performing the duties which fall to them, that they are by no means alive to their responsibilities, and that democracy demands a higher level of trained, well-informed, and, if necessary, specialised capacity in the agents which are required to perform its work. There is an increasing impatience against the existence of a class that merely vegetates, lives off the fat of the land, and squanders, according to their whim and fancy, the wealth that others have toiled to create. There is no room for a purely

ornamental class in a modern state, and it is an abuse of liberty and a danger to social advancement to allow any large section of the community to be idle and parasitic.

The word "aristocracy" is now a social term, and does not quite cover the entire class under consideration; but it is very difficult to hit upon a word that does, and the word "aristocrat" must therefore be used generally. Nobility denotes a still more restricted section of titled personages. The expressions "upper class" and "society" are too vague. "The rich" comes near to being accurate, but it is still too narrow, and suggests an economic discussion on the cause of riches which is entirely outside the argument.

The comparatively small section of the community with which we are here concerned certainly consider themselves "gentlemen." More than this, they claim the monopoly of the term, and are secretly convinced that other people are not, strictly speaking, gentlemen. But, as will be seen, this claim is quite inadmissible. They have no business to restrict the word to those alone who bear a particular aristocratic cachet, the presence or absence of which they pride themselves on being able to detect immediately. Not only is the definition of the word "gentleman" difficult because the exact meaning of the term is illusive, but because each one who attempts to define it is slightly biased according to his own social status. Just as in the upper strata of society the interpretation may be too

narrow, so in the lower strata it may be too broad, being sometimes employed for any one who is not actually employed in manual labour.

The word "gentleman" is, anyhow, very elastic; but it has two meanings—the one moral, the other social. Both of these must in due course be carefully examined. In its broadest social sense it has become considerably extended, and covers a very much larger field than it did in the past; whereas the moral significance of the word has remained unchanged, and can only be applied to a limited number. The two categories are by no means identical—that is to say, a gentleman, socially speaking, may be a gentleman, morally speaking; on the other hand, he may not. There are many who have every claim to the title of gentleman as used to-day, but who have not been born in a privileged position and have not from the first had social advantages. These are not to be included in the discussion. If the word "gentleman" is used, therefore, it is in a restricted sense, but as an extension of the term "aristocrat."

The governing class until lately consisted almost exclusively of men born, bred, and educated as aristocrats or gentlemen of the upper class—that is to say, with means enough either to free them entirely from the necessity of having to work for a living or to adopt a profession merely as a pastime or a temporary occupation. The advantages, privileges, and favours on which

they formerly depended are found in modern life to carry with them drawbacks and dangers which appear, as each decade passes, to make their position more untenable. The main cause of their failure to rise to such responsibilities as they still retain lies in their training and education, which must be closely considered. There was a time when a good education was one of the marks of a gentleman. With the general spread of educational opportunities this has ceased to be the case. We now seem to be entering on an era in which want of education is to be the mark of this sort of gentleman. If in their endeavour to rehabilitate themselves the aristocracy were to insist on better training and education they would defeat their own object, for by this means their eyes would be opened to the falsity of their present position. Ill-equipped as they are now, they are destined to become more and more ineffective. Were they better equipped they would no longer aim at the objects nor cling to the ideals which at present seem to them desirable. They would have the sense to regard the decline in their own authority, necessitated by the rise of democracy, as an excuse for gradually renouncing all claim to special treatment.

There are two opposing rocks of strong prejudice, between which it will be necessary to steer a middle course. Prejudice is caused either by incomplete and inaccurate knowledge of circumstances or by a fixed determination to view only

one side of the question. On the one side there is the intolerant and aggressively hostile view that all the upper class are titled, gilded, idle popinjays, who may be disregarded and despised as useless and negligible; on the other side, an arrogant and equally intolerant belief that refinement and excellence can only be produced by what is supposed to be good breeding, leisure, and money, and that men who are not aristocrats are cads. The first view is held by a comparatively small number of a very large class; the second is held by a comparatively large number of a very small class, for whose ignorance there can be no excuse. There can be no place for the sham democratic view held by those who insist that the life and career of any workingman is noble and wonderful when compared with the life of any gentleman. This idealisation is a form of prejudice; it ignores the fact that his conditions prevent the worker from being able to develop as he ought to, and that this is the very reason why all efforts should be concentrated on improving them. On the other hand, a still wider berth must be given to the superstitious beliefs in the superior qualities of an aristocracy and its essential fitness to undertake the functions of government and of social leadership.* Even between these two extremes the channel is very controversial and debatable. If any course can be clearly marked, it is the line of argument which gladly accepts the gradual supremacy of democracy, acknowledging

* See "British Family Antiquity," by William Playfair.

that it can be achieved step by step through arduous endeavour and properly organised education, so that it may attain its complete expression by acquiring a degree of efficiency which will be the best proof of its aptitude for control. There should also be due recognition of certain genuine qualities worth rescuing from a vanishing aristocracy which can be utilised for the common good, and which will become of enhanced value once they are finally detached from the corrupting influence of the illiberal spirit of privilege and idleness.

The true ideal of democracy is not equality of type, but equality of opportunity, which might produce far more varied types and, with the level raised, far more surprising achievements. But this is not to be approached except through education. Even when there is money to provide the opportunity the trouble is that there is not the sense or the foresight to seek it. Democracy must be on its guard in its very natural prejudice against traditions of refinement and leisure which have been so misused by the aristocracy. It must be careful not to insist on a general average type characterised by the self-satisfied mediocrity of a bourgeoisie devoid of dignity or noble aspirations, more hostile to labour than the aristocracy itself, and only educated in a purely utilitarian sense towards a standard of brute efficiency. It is by the true sort of education that leads to enlightenment that democracy will avoid this kind of disaster. The ultra-technical narrow training which pays no

heed to scholarships, æsthetics, or even manners is the surest method of paving the way to a plutocracy. There are signs of this in the richer middle class, and they are pointing the way to those below them.

Equality of opportunity is prevented at present chiefly by the extremes of poverty and riches. The poor cannot get anything like a fair chance for their children, and the rich, instead of spending their wealth in providing specially favourable opportunities for the younger generation, and insisting on the highest level possible of educational efficiency, are tempted by that very wealth to neglect the close personal supervision of the children's upbringing and to submit to a system which affords a sufficiently expensive but utterly unsuitable course of training for their boys. It is commonly supposed that while the poor are deprived of adequate opportunities the rich are amply provided with them. But no one can say that the children of the rich have anything like favourable opportunities afforded them. Their fathers seem to have consented to be party to a conspiracy to provide for them exclusive and exceptional opportunities which are not only inadequate but are turning out to be positively injurious.

It may be convenient to detach one class for special examination, and in this case we are selecting the class which generally escapes serious criticism, though it may sometimes come in for wild condemnation. All classes and sections, however, are closely interdependent, and

no beneficial change can be effected in one without some alteration in the others. As it is, the lowest class fails to develop through want of money and excess of toil. The middle class may have sufficient money, and in many ways is the best situated. But it is still excluded in many cases from rising in the chief professions by being deprived of the special sort of interest and the social advantages which give free entry to the best positions. Hence it becomes further hampered by turning its energy to the pursuit of the false ideal set by its social superiors, and by hankering after social promotion instead of helping to break down the interest and undesirable influence which still prevent certain professions from being open to free competition. The upper class has the money, the special interest, and the social advantages, and to it all doors are open. But being in no way intrinsically superior to the rest of the community, and these so-called advantages being in reality serious handicaps, it suffers even more than the rest from arrested and crippled mental and moral growth.

The gentlemen of this class, therefore, ought to be brought under the microscope of the sociologist. His environment having changed, many of his functions have altered with it or altogether ceased. If there is any serious deterioration, we ought to find out not only how far it has damaged the species itself, but in what way the general community is affected.

CHAPTER II

THE PAST

Attitude of the aristocracy unchanged—The part they have played in history—The gentleman of the sixteenth century—Low standard under the Stuarts—Puritan influence—Reaction at the Restoration—The gentleman's children in the seventeenth century—Manners—Clothes—The aristocracy of the eighteenth century—Swift, on education—Satire on the governing class—Sinecures—Parliament only representative of upper class—Privileges of aristocrats—Importance of dress—Depravity at the end of eighteenth century—Reasons for change of tone in Society—The duel—Landed gentry—Cavaliers and Roundheads—Whigs and Tories—The fear of democracy—Difficulty of choosing types.

In tracing the actions, opinions, and ideas of the aristocracy back through the centuries of our national history, it will be apparent that the difference of one epoch from another, and the change from one era to the succeeding era are, so far as this class is concerned, largely matters of habit, custom, and fashion. The striking thing is that the point of view and the attitude of mind remains practically the same. A superior governing class remains a superior governing class so long as, by some means or other, it can convince the majority

of the people of its superiority, and so keep in its hands the reins of government. To take only the last three hundred years, we find the gradual and profound social and economic changes hardly touched the aristocracy in their sheltered position, and passed almost unnoticed by them. Their castle on the sand served their purpose perfectly, and was, in truth, solid enough so long as the tide was far enough out. The heyday of their domination was the period between the Revolution and the passing of the Reform Bill, a time when the autocratic power of the sovereign was broken down, and they consequently secured control of the government of the country. They had done a service in helping to destroy the prerogatives of an absolute monarchy, they were acknowledged as governors, leaders, and captains *par excellence*, they had the practical monopoly of education, and they were without rivals. What may be described as the reality of their position makes their qualities and characteristics, bad and good, seem more important, more salient, and of more account than those of their successors to-day, whose position is so entirely false and unreal, and who hardly count as an organic part of an industrial community.

It is not really surprising that the point of view should remain unaltered because a man on a pedestal, be that pedestal of granite or cardboard, always has the same perspective of outlook. His eyes must be cast down at others,

and the gaze of others, except those who are also on pedestals, must be turned upwards at him. For two hundred years and more before 1832 one may notice in varying intensity the same arrogance, the same patronising condescension, the same selfishness, the same importance attached to outward manner and to dress, the same worldliness and the same brilliance and distinction, which made them the fear and envy of other orders of society. Their education varied. Sometimes it reached a comparatively high level, and it appears to have degenerated when their political power began to be threatened.

Most of the names we can recall in the world of action and in the public service are those of the aristocrats, the nobility, or anyhow the gentlemen of the day. This is not to be wondered at, because history was written, and is to a large extent still written, on their behalf, from their point of view, and for their glorification. From the romantic days of the idealised knight of chivalry, when the materials for history are very scanty, down to the prosaic nineteenth century, with its voluminous records, their brilliant figures occupy the front of the stage with heroic deeds, wars, intrigues, orations, and functions, in which they take the leading part and stand out as the only actors of note. And yet behind them, invisible, were the millions, silent and unobserved, building up the country's strength and laying the deep foundations of

future progress. But the people had no historian. Their privations, their trials, their achievements are not recorded, unless they came into actual conflict with the lords and masters, and then we are told the masters' version of the story.

There never has been any clear line drawn between gentlemen and other folk. What constituted a gentleman socially was ever in dispute. Ease, leisure, and plenty were always the recognised characteristics, as we know from the lines repeated by John Ball's rebels in the fourteenth century—

> "When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?"

In the sixteenth century it was supposed that the possession of a coat of arms was indispensable for a complete gentleman. This idea continued because those who held the offices of heralds desired to profit as much as possible by the fees they could collect for registering coats. Though this purely heraldic notion did not last, as it was soon found that a coat of arms could be assumed without the shadow of a claim, it is interesting as showing the attempt to constitute gentlemen into a distinct order and classify them in a separate category.

The moral attributes of a gentleman were appreciated from the first. Henry Peacham, in his "Compleat Gentleman," in the seventeenth century draws the distinction: "Neither must

we honour or esteem those ennobled or made gentle in blood who by mechanic and base means have raked up a mass of wealth . . . or have purchased an ill coat [of arms] at a good rate; no more than a player upon the stage for wearing a lord's cast suit; since nobility hangeth not upon the airy esteem of vulgar opinion, but is indeed of itself essential and absolute."

The aristocracy of the Tudor period had its faults and vices, but they were cloaked by grace and chivalry, and in some cases modified by scholarship and enlightenment. Under the Stuarts the tone and character of the aristocracy greatly deteriorated. In the Court of James I. there were a number of notorious evil livers. Mrs. Hutchinson, in her contemporary memoir of her husband, describes it "as a nursery of lust and intemperance; the generality of the gentry of the land soon learned the Court fashion, and every great house in the country became a sty of uncleanness." Most of the old nobility and peers of the best type avoided the Court and spent their time in travel, or in the retirement of their country houses. The account of Cambridge given by d'Ewes in 1620 shows how widespread the vicious manner of living had become: "The main thing that made me even weary of the College was that swearing, drinking, rioting, and hatred of all piety and virtue under false and adulterated nicknames did abound there and generally in all the University. Nay, the very sin of lust began to be known and prac-

tised by very boys, so as I was fain to live almost a recluse's life conversing cheerfully in our own College with some of the honester fellows thereof."

Although under Charles I. there was an improvement, the cavalier manner of living was still one of profligacy and extravagance, and came in for hot condemnation from the Puritans, who were inclined to veer too much to the other extreme and set up an unreachable standard of austerity and self-denial. While they put down bull-baiting, bear-baiting, horse-racing, and cock-fighting, they also abolished the village revels and the dance under the maypole, and condemned half the popular observances of England as superstitions. The result was that a charge of hypocrisy was levelled against them, not always without reason; and when the reaction came against their code of manners and morals, it was so extreme that society was plunged into a deeper vortex than ever of vice and frivolity.

During the ascendancy of the Puritan influence the aristocracy were in low water. The people of London "could scarce endure the sight of a gentleman." Between the two alternatives it was difficult for a gentleman to make a choice. Sir John Reresby decided to travel abroad with a tutor, as he found "such as lived in town were either zealots with the rebellious schismatical superstitions of those times, or so very debauched on the other hand that it was very hard for a young man to avoid infection on the one side or the other."

The Restoration, as already pointed out, marked an epoch of reaction in the aristocracy against what was considered Puritan hypocrisy. The sovereign always exercised a strong influence over the manners of the Court, and the Court in their turn set the pattern for the nobility and gentry. Charles II.'s selfishness and duplicity led him to take a cynical view of the world, and through his influence cynicism became the mark of the "fine gentleman." Duelling, swearing, gambling, and drinking, often combined with a shameless brutality, were fashionable and considered correct so long as the outward appearance gave the impression of refinement. The courtier is told in one of the comedies of the time that "he must dress well, dance well, fence well, have a talent for love-letters, and agreeable voice, be amorous and discreet—but not too constant."

The reaction, indeed, was social more than political. It was a reconstitution of the old social order that had been disturbed by the Commonwealth. The lords, gentry, lawyers, and clergy returned to their old positions. There was even a scheme proposed for making a sharp and permanent division between classes. The nobles were to be raised higher above the masses, the commons confined to trade, the clergy entrusted with jurisdiction, and so on. An estimate made by Gregory King in 1688 gives some idea of their financial position; he puts the average income of a knight at £650, an esquire £450, a gentleman

£280. These sums of money must be multiplied fivefold or sixfold to be expressed in modern equivalents.*

While the aristocracy of the Stuart epoch was very strongly contrasted with the rest of the people, and was increasing in power, nevertheless the personal contact between the rich and the poor was closer than it was later. The gentleman's life was sometimes simple and frugal, and his education cheaper and more practical.† The great difference of environment must always be borne in mind. Very slow coach travelling was attended by a certain amount of danger and adventure, and not till 1695 was there any daily press. Gentlemen to-day have no wolves disturbing the peace of their country homes, no highwaymen to make travel adventurous, no fresh explorations to make when they travel abroad, no hardships and discomforts in the mechanical side of domestic life. But whatever beneficent effects railways, motor-cars, stacks of newspapers, electric light and bath-rooms may bring in their train, it is certain that even the idleness of the Stuart gentleman had its stimulating and arduous side, whereas the twentieth-century idleness can only be described as enervating and demoralising.

Gentlemen's children in the seventeenth century were treated with great severity and often neglected. They were left to servants and

* "Social England," ed. by H. D. Trail and J. S. Mann.

† "England under the Stuarts," G. M. Trevelyan.

inferiors, and in the earliest years put out to nurse with country women. But in later years the sons were frequently given a liberal education and a proper training for the public duties they were destined to undertake. Sons of the gentry were taken into the households of lords and county magnates as scholars, pages, or companions, where they learned something of the high life of the period, its bad as well as its good side. The younger sons of the aristocracy were taught by the chaplain, who was reckoned among the "domestics," and was required to leave the dinner-table before the sweet course. After going to a Public School and University they were sent to the cities to seek their fortune in commerce, or they would go to the Bar, or into the Church. The eldest son was rarely sent to school or University. After a course of legal training to prepare him for the duties of justice of the peace, he would finish his education by travelling abroad with a tutor, and thereby gaining a close acquaintance with foreign countries and foreign languages.* Marriage seems to have been regarded as a purely commercial proceeding—so much "portion" against so much income. Affection between husbands and wives or parents and children was extremely strong, but the ordinary falling in love of young men and maidens was not thought of much importance. "I mean to marry my daughter to £2,000 a year," writes Sir John Bacchus to Sir Ralph Verney. The

* Ibid.

bargaining was done by parents and relations. The children were not always consulted.*

There are instances of severe studies being undertaken by boys at a very early age. Evelyn's son could read at the age of two and a half, and before five had "learned out Puerilis" and "made progress in Comenius Janua." As to sending boys to Public Schools, two opposite views are given by a son of Lord Cork, who went to Eton when he was eight, and by Locke, who had been at Westminster. The former writes, "Breeding up of great men's children at home tempts them to nicety, to pride and idleness, and contributes much more to give them a good opinion of themselves than to deserve it."

Whereas Locke says, "How any one's being put into a mixed herd of boys, and there learning to wrangle at trap or rook at span farthing fits him for conversation or business, I do not see."

Chatham at a later period expressing his opinion on the same subject said, "A Public School might suit a boy of a turbulent, forward disposition, but would not do where there was any gentleness."

There were about three hundred boys at Westminster, and Eton was no bigger. The other Public Schools of note that were in existence were Winchester, the earliest foundation of them all, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, St. Paul's, and Merchant Taylors', all founded in the sixteenth century, and Charterhouse at the beginning of

* Verney Family Memoirs.

the seventeenth century. But they were small schools, and some of only local importance. Education was indeed restricted to a select few, but those few were not necessarily the rich. The strong class feeling that is now a marked characteristic of English higher education was of much later growth.

In the *fine fleur* of the aristocracy manners at all periods have been considered of very first importance. This fact indicates better than anything could the quality of their power and of their position. A very large majority of the human race are dazzled by superficial characteristics in their fellow-men, and are ready to succumb at once to the charms of discreet and attractive manners. It requires a fairly high standard of education to be discriminating enough to see through the exterior, to pierce the gilded shell and reach the husk. A gentility of manner may be natural or assumed, but it may also be of considerable use as a weapon in imposing the authority of a domineering class. The poor, the unlettered, those whose speech is coarse and who have no conception of the niceties of deportment and the polished urbanity of the drawing-room stand in immediate awe of a fine gentleman. They surrender at once to what in their ignorance they suppose is a superior force. All along the aristocracy have felt this power at their hand easy for them to wield, more especially when education was their monopoly. For that reason they have made a speciality of assiduously culti-

vating manners sometimes highly elaborate, at other times elaborately modest. "*La fierté dans les manières est la vice des sots.*"

The cult of manners was carried to an extreme at the time when Locke protested and in his treatise on Education urged parents not to beat their children for "unfashionable carriage." Unusual value was set on social accomplishments. The dancing-master received the largest share of fees of tuition, and in the desire for "good breeding" the mental education of the boys tended to become neglected. The Public Schools corresponded to the schools founded in France and Germany during the seventeenth century exclusively for the nobles, who were taught subjects especially adapted for Court life. The Provost of Eton was esteemed "not only a fine gentleman himself but very skilled in the art of making others so." There were teaching establishments for fencing, riding, and dancing, but music was evidently thought too difficult a pursuit for a gentleman. A contemporary treatise on education says, "Musick I think not worth a gentleman's labor requiring much Industry and Time to learn and little to lose it. It is used chiefly to please others who may receive the same gusto from a mercenary (to the perfection of many of whom few gentlemen arrive) at a very easy rate. I should rather advise singing especially if you fear him subject to consumption." * The practice of talking Latin was

* "Of Education," 1699.

dying out, though we read of fines being imposed at Westminster for talking English in hall or school.

Much time and attention had to be spent on clothes, which were of the richest quality, and very expensive. The writer of the "Gentleman's Calling" (1705), protests, "So much cost so much business goes to it that one may almost as cheaply and easily rig out a ship as set out a gentleman in his complete equipage . . . a lively instance it is of the multiplying faculty of vanity that can improve Nature's simple necessity of covering to such exorbitant excess and has nurst up the first fig-leaves to such a luxuriant growth."

But the fineness of manner did not reach the country gentry, for he seldom visited London, and a journey abroad was for him a rare occurrence. Although Macaulay's sketch of the seventeenth-century squire may be exaggerated, he must in his seclusion have led a rough and somewhat boorish life. In spite of the rudeness and coarseness of his habits, he prided himself on being an aristocrat and on being able to trace a long genealogy. There seems to have been a great faith in the magic of good birth. Sir Simon d'Ewes declared that he "ever accounted it a great outward blessing to be well descended"; and of Colonel Hutchinson his wife writes, "his great heart could never stoop to marrying into so mean a stock."

Burnet writes very severely in his account of the country gentry. "They are the worst in-

structed and least knowing of any of their rank I ever went amongst. After they have forgot their Catechism they acquire no new knowledge but what they learn in plays and romances." He also deplored the barbarous custom which required for the honour of the house that none should go out of it sober. He compares the country gentry unfavourably with the trading classes, whom he describes as "the best body in the nation, generous, sober, and charitable."

Yet with all their want of polish and education, and in spite of their foolish conceit as to their nobility of birth, they must undoubtedly have been men of vigour and of great force of character and natural gifts, untouched by any educating machine which tries to turn out men like coins from a stamp, and not emasculated by the sybaritic habits that produce manikins.

The author of a "Gentleman's Calling" (1705) had grave misgivings as to the use gentlemen were making of their opportunities, though he quite accepts their superior position. In his preface he says, "I am to treat only of those particular duties which are incumbent on you as gentlemen and therein show you that considered as such you have a calling and so free you of that reproach and misery of being unprofitable burdens of the earth: and then evince to you also that that calling is so far from implying anything of real toil or uneasiness that it is only an art of refining and sublimating your pleasures rendering them more grateful and

exquisite and so will (if attended to) make good to you in earnest your mistaken pretence to a Life of sensuality and delight."

It is an attempt in fact to teach them how to do nothing without harming others. "The Whole Duty of Man," by the same author, was read out to Eton boys every Sunday before chapel.* With all its shortcomings the aristocracy was the only class after the Restoration from which men who were to fill high positions in the State were drawn, and this is a consideration to be borne in mind when comparing their position with that of their successors to-day.

In the eighteenth century there is a more noticeable contrast between the education and capabilities of the few who came to the front and the main body of the aristocracy which remained in a hopeless state of ignorance. It was an age of laxness and of coarseness, which came to be exchanged later for pomposity and excessive artificiality. But the aristocracy were actually governing the country; they were, therefore, absorbed in politics, and this is the distinguishing mark of the period. The commercial spirit had not yet begun to make itself felt, and though in individual instances the love of material gain was pronounced it was not a leading characteristic of the aristocracy as a class. The short essay on Modern Education written by Swift † was probably a mere note for what he

* Maxwell Lyte's "History of Eton College."

† *Intelligencer*, No. 9.

intended to be a larger work. His line of argument is practically identical with that which the present writer will endeavour to pursue in the later chapters of this book. "The present scope I would aim at," says Swift, "is to prove that some proportion of human knowledge appears requisite to those who by their birth or fortune are called to the making of laws, and in a subordinate way to the execution of them; and that such knowledge is not to be obtained without a miracle under the frequent corrupt and sottish methods of educating those who are born to wealth or titles. . . . I am come to this determination that education is always worse in proportion to the wealth and grandeur of the parents." The boy he declares "is taught from the nursery that he must inherit a great estate and has no need to mind his book, which is a lesson he never forgets to the end of his life." When the subject of modern education in the twentieth-century sense is dealt with in later chapters, the words of the eighteenth-century satirist, with the exception perhaps of the expression corrupt, might well be repeated. In commenting on Swift's treatise Sir Walter Scott writes in 1814, "It is a matter of important remark that since the Continent has been shut against wanderers of rank and wealth we have seen symptoms of the revival of ancient learning and discipline among our nobility and youths of fortune."

Towards the end of the eighteenth century,

indeed, there were instances of a high intellectual level being attained by some of those connected with Government and part of London society, and this influence even reached the country squire. They had a good classical training as well as a knowledge of foreign languages, and they were cultivated in literature and art, as is shown by the books and pictures they collected and the houses they built.

It was the popularity of the aristocracy that made it easy for them to retain the power in their own hands. The voiceless people regarded them with awe as beings who, for reasons they could not explain, were destined to be elevated above them. Whatever drama was being played they were the chief actors; they were, in fact, the only people who counted. The same names recur again and again, the same few families intimately associated together seem to hold in their hands the guiding reins of political, social, and executive power. "They were fiery if not laborious politicians; well read gentlemen for the most part; and sportsmen every inch of them." * The quarrels of these patricians had a national significance: to read of them is to read history.

The nobility were not, strictly speaking, an isolated class, and had never at any time gone the length of claiming for themselves immunity from taxation. Their sons, except the eldest, descended into the ranks of commoners, and they were indistinguishable from the rest of the gentry.

* "George III. and Charles Fox," Sir George Trevelyan.

The line of demarcation, as now, was not between the titled nobility and the commoners, but between the aristocracy or leisured class, who were educated, and the people, who were subservient workers, because at that time they were uneducated.

Although the idea of democracy was, as yet, unknown, there were always a few bold spirits who were ready to expose and to ridicule the preposterous pretensions of their social superiors. An amusing skit appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1739, in the form of proposals for amending the Ten Commandments in favour of the governing class. For instance, the Sixth Commandment is declared to have been "miserably perverted by a set of cowardly, low-spirited, superstitious expositors who make it criminal even in men of Spirit and Quality to do justice to themselves and their characters by punishing the ill manners of any little dirty Poltroon that shall presume to affront them by running him through ye body, beating out his brains, or any other such ways and means as have in all ages been thought reasonable and reputable to secure the Regard due to their Rank and Fortune and chastise the insolence of their inferiors." This Commandment could, therefore, only be violated by "any person below the degree of a Gentleman bearing a coat of arms for three descents," whereas in the case of "any Nobleman or Gentleman" a similar deed was to be considered only as manslaughter. The Seventh Commandment

might be broken with impunity by "People of Figure and Fortune whose exuberance of Blood and Riches may require such expedients to reduce them to a sober degree of mediocrity and coolness." Any "little pittiful Rogue" committing some petty theft was to be deemed guilty of a breach of the Eighth Commandment, but "this shall not be construed to extend to people of higher stations of Life nor to those greater articles of Loss and Gain which may chance to be in dispute between them." The Ninth Commandment was not to extend to "Court Favourites, Royal Minions, First Ministers, Secretaries of State, Privy Counsellors, Decypherers, Spies, Pimps and Informers."

It is an elaborate satire on what was then, as now, a fact that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. But it is interesting as showing that some, anyhow, were under no delusion as to the gross injustices of a society where rank and privilege counted for so much.

Historians dwell with enthusiasm on the amount of labour gratuitously accomplished by the upper classes, and expatiate on the remarkable phenomenon of a class possessing all the means of enjoyment and luxury, yet devoting themselves to "the painful drudgery and bondage of public life." * But so long as they were certain of preferment, of high appointments, and, consequently, of power, popularity, and fame, so long as they were assisting to maintain the

* See "England in the Eighteenth Century," Lecky.

dominance of their own class, there is nothing the least surprising, or indeed remarkable, in gentlemen preferring work of the most interesting character to empty idleness. We can note to-day when their chances of obtaining, as a matter of course, high positions in the public service are rapidly diminishing, what was supposed to be their disinterested desire for public service is noticeably decreasing. No doubt by this service in the eighteenth century they did much to prevent the management of affairs passing into the hands of reckless adventurers, but again it may be said the prizes made it well worth their while.

Moreover, it must not be forgotten that there were a large number of sinecures reserved for them, in the enjoyment of which they received a high salary without having to perform any duties at all. Connected with the Customs alone there were no less than 196 absolute sinecures in the gift of the First Lord of the Treasury, the united income of which amounted to £42,000.* The Chief Justices in Eyre with no duties to perform received £4,000 a year each, the Clerk of the Pells £3,000, the Clerk of the Parliaments £5,000, the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports £5,000, and there were Tellers of the Exchequer, Paymasters of Marines, Registrars of the Chancery of Barbadoes, Rangers of Royal Forests, a King's Turnspit, who was a Member of Parliament, and a host of other well-paid

* "England in the Eighteenth Century," Lecky.

sinecures in Scotland and Ireland as well as England.* Public life was, therefore, not sheer drudgery for the gentleman.† As a result of the report of the Select Committee in 1817, the Government were compelled to reduce a number of these sinecures, and their gradual abolition was continued in subsequent years.

Statesmen of the first half of the eighteenth century were deeply tainted with treachery and duplicity, and corruption in political affairs was rife. Some of the professions were degraded in order to form lucrative posts for the younger members of the aristocratic families, and the representative character of Parliament was utterly perverted by the multiplication of nomination boroughs.

* Walpole's "History of England" and Report of Select Committee on Finance, 1817.

† An instance may be given of a family which in 1830 received remuneration from public funds in the following manner :—

	Per Annum. £
The noble Earl held a Tellership of the Exchequer	2,700
A Clerkship of the Crown in Chancery	1,105
His son, Deputy Teller of the Exchequer	1,000
Clerk to the Privy Council	2,000
Another son, a pension	350
Commissionership of Bankrupts and Receiver of the Court of the Duchy of Lancaster	850
Another son, Treasurership of the Government of Malta	1,560
A daughter, pension	900
Another daughter, pension	250

—"Our Old Nobility," Howard Evans.

In the House of Commons there was, after 1710, a high property qualification for members. They had to possess a certain estate of land; in the case of knights of the shire £500, and in the case of burgesses £300. In addition to this candidates had to bear the burden of the official expenses of elections, which grew rapidly during the eighteenth century. Parliament was thus solely representative of the upper class, whose power continued to increase.* But it may be observed here that, when it came to the struggle over the great Reform Bill, some of the chief aristocratic borough owners and many peers of old creation were on the side of the people, while the latest creations were among the most obstinate opponents of progress.

In the Peerage Bill of 1719 an attempt was made to convert the nobility definitely into a separate caste. Had it been carried it would have made the House of Lords an almost unchangeable body, entirely beyond the control of King or Ministers or Commons, by strictly limiting the number of peers which might be created. It originated, however, from party interest rather than aristocratic exclusiveness, as the Whigs feared their majority in the Upper House might be overthrown by the creation of Tory peers. But anyhow the attempt failed.

The nobility had in their hands the preponderance of both wealth and influence, and a great deal was made of the pomp and pretensions of

* "The Village Labourer," J. L. and Barbara Hammond.

rank. Their children, however, were still very much neglected, and left to the mercy of servants, who in those days were of a very coarse type. On the other hand, the level of learning was high for boys, if we may judge by Chesterfield's son, who was taught Latin, Greek, French, history, and geography before he was nine. But in the Public Schools a greater laxity seems to have become prevalent. "The general tendency of society towards later hours for rising and for going to bed had also affected Eton, and the increase in the number of boys belonging to the aristocratic class may, to some extent, account for the great extension for the time allowed for recreation." * Peers, sons of peers, and baronets sat in the stalls in the College Chapel elevated above their schoolfellows. But the custom of the previous century of inscribing the names of noblemen at the head of their class, whether they deserved it or not, was no longer continued.

At the Universities the gold tuft or tassel which was worn by noblemen on their caps as a distinguishing mark became proverbial. The expression "tuft-hunters" came into general use, and was applied to snobs, long after the gold tuft itself had disappeared. At Oxford and Cambridge students of noble families, who were often attended by French tutors, were still exempted from any examinations for their degree; they were not allowed to enter into the competition for honours

* "History of Eton College," Sir Maxwell Lyte.

presumably because it was feared that they would as a rule fail to distinguish themselves. They were not even compelled to attend college lectures. By this means a clique was created composed of youths who despised learning, idled their time, frequented Newmarket, and contracted heavy debts. In order to avoid this vicious system, many parents sent their sons on the grand tour.* But a contemporary writer in a defence of the Universities declares that "of late years it has been the fashion to send many of our young nobility and gentry to foreign universities, where their education is completed by sending them home coxcombs and atheists." †

After the uncouth roughness of the Walpole period, manners again were studied, and an attempt was made to introduce greater refinement. There was a circle possessed of "the distinguishing diction that marks the man of fashion, a certain language of conversation that every gentleman should be master of." ‡ It reminds one of the absurd books which appear even now telling us how "ladies and gentlemen" pronounce certain words, and what words should be avoided by those who desire to be thought "ladies and gentlemen."

The changes in fashion of dress even of men, if closely studied, would be an interesting exposure of the varying forms which vanity has

* "Coke of Norfolk and his Friends," A. M. W. Sterling.

† *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1798.

‡ "Social England," ed. by H. D. Trail and J. S. Mann.

taken. The evolution of dress is only the outward side of the evolution of manners, habits, and general status. The whole idea of expensive dressing arose from a desire on the part of the leisured class, which dates from very early times, to show in as pronounced a way as possible that they could not be confounded with the working class ; to wear something, in fact, in which it would be impossible to do any manual work. Hence the wigs, ruffs, embroidered coats and waistcoats, silk stockings, gold buckles. This rather crude form of ostentation reached a very extravagant pitch in the middle of the eighteenth century, when eccentricities of costume became preposterous and great importance was attached to dress. It was the time of the "macaronis" and "jessamies," and men's costume was commented on as much as women's. "What! did he address you in a coat not worth looking at? What a shabby wretch," says Evelina's partner at a dance. But no fashion is unchanging. The elaborate finery was gradually discarded by gentlemen whose costume became of a simpler cut and a soberer hue, till, in mid-Victorian days, the frock-coat of the duke and the shopwalker were of the same cut, the earl and the waiter began to wear the same evening attire, and the county gentleman and farmer were indistinguishable in appearance.

The rise of democracy, the incidents in town and country connected with industrial unrest, and the growing class animosity no doubt

influenced the gentleman in desiring, anyhow out of doors in the street and the highway, to avoid being signalised by his apparel as a privileged and, in his own estimation, superior being.

On what we should consider a small income a gentleman could afford more display in the eighteenth century than he does now. The "County Gentleman's Vademecum" (1717) gives the annual expenses of a nobleman's family of twenty-five to thirty persons as £1,200 to £1,500, but the wages of twenty servants only amounted to £170 a year. The system of vails was the custom. "You'll find all the servants drawn up in the passage like a file of musketeers, from the house servant down to the lowest livery servant, and each of them holds his hand out to you in as deliberate a manner as the servants in our inns on a like occasion."

The difficulty of travelling and of getting provisions prevented journeys into the country from London from being fashionable. When a duke proposed to journey into Sussex, in 1746, word was sent from London that keepers and persons who knew the holes and sloughs should come to meet his grace with lanterns and long poles to help him on his way. When house parties did assemble they stayed for months at a time. In town balls, assemblies, and masquerades were popular; Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and the Pantheon were the rage. An attempt was made to stop masquerades; but Mrs. Pendarves writes, in

1727: "Masquerades are not to be forbid, but there is to be another entertainment barefaced which are balls." A fashionable wedding is a society function to which we have grown accustomed. Converting our churches into drawing-rooms for a whispering, inquisitive, dressed-up afternoon party does not strike us as it did our ancestors when the custom first came in. Every one, we are told, spoke against it as the most shocking thing in the world. "A public wedding!" Miss Burney exclaims; "oh, what a gauntlet for any woman of delicacy to run!"

Of the various watering-places where the fashionable assembled the most frequented was Bath, where Pope wrote that all the morning was spent in "How d'ye do's?" all the afternoon in asking, "What's trumps?"

There is really very little appreciable change. The Duke now does not stick in the mud, but has a punctured tyre. Visits do not last months, but only a few days, because modern invention in methods of conveyance has produced the itch of restlessness in those who have nothing to do. Bath is too near, too old-fashioned, too middle-class; Marienbad, Schwalbach, Pau, &c., attract their annual pilgrims for the moment. But the intention, the outlook, the routine is unchanged. We may claim, however, in the twentieth century to be getting rid of some of the coarser forms of dissoluteness.

Through the eighteenth century gambling and drinking continued to be marks of a gentleman,

and in the earlier part of the nineteenth century the state of the marriage laws, together with their own want of sobriety, led many young men of good family to ruin their lives by entering into secret and irregular unions in churches where no licence or formalities were required. The extreme severity of class distinctions, and the close watch kept by parents to prevent children marrying beneath their station, only had the effect of encouraging clandestine marriages. At the end of the eighteenth century, in spite of many noteworthy exceptions, society in general reached the high-water mark of depravity. Conjugal fidelity was sneered at as out of fashion, and Chesterfield, in his letters, instructs his son in the art of seduction as part of a polite education.

Religion was despised and church-going condemned. The prominent statesmen of the time were nearly all unbelievers in any form of Christianity. In the upper class "every one laughs," said Montesquieu on his visit to England, "if one talks of religion."

The Methodist movement was largely responsible for the religious revival which helped to transform the whole tone of English society.

The French Revolution, among its many far-reaching effects, also had a sobering influence on the British aristocracy; and after the Napoleonic wars, and the consequent misery and privation which they brought in their wake, there was a change in the moral atmosphere and a reaction

against artificiality and excessive frivolity. There arose a wave of humanitarian, philanthropic sentiment, and a desire to curb grossness and immorality, and to curtail the incessant round of gaiety. Promenades and masquerades, which had been very popular, came to an end; Ranelagh and the Pantheon were closed, and popular feeling became excited against gambling in high society; Chief Justice Kenyon declared that he would set in the pillory any who were brought before him for gambling, "though they be the first ladies in the land." Gillray caricatured two well-known ladies, whose faro banks were notorious, as "Pharaoh's daughters" standing in the pillory, bejewelled and dressed up in all their finery. Neither gambling nor debt have been condemned as inconsistent with the proper conduct of a gentleman, whose code of honour has always been special and distinctive. There is no need to discuss this as an ethical problem, because all codes of honour are arbitrary and relative to people, time, and place. The point to be noticed is that his code was different, and its violation was met by particular treatment.

The duel existed as a means of settling differences which arose from the infringement of this unwritten social law. No record of a duel occurs before the sixteenth century, and they were rare before the reign of James I. But in the eighteenth century they became very frequent, and in the reign of

George III. 172 were fought, 91 being attended with fatal results. Famous duels took place among the leading men of the day, such as the duels between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun, described by Thackeray in "Esmond"; Byron and Mr. Chaworth, in which the latter was killed; Charles J. Fox and Mr. Adams, the Duke of York and Colonel Lennox, W. Pitt and George Tierney, George Canning and Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea, and many others. The practice continued in the nineteenth century until the force of public opinion suppressed it. The Prince Consort attempted unsuccessfully to institute courts of honour, but the important amendment to the articles of war,* which was eventually incorporated in the consolidated Army Act of 1879, was the chief means of putting an end to this uncivilised custom. Duels could only be fought by gentlemen against gentlemen; no mean individual could challenge a gentleman to a duel. It was a class distinction which was doomed to die out in a more democratic age.

The ebb and flow of aristocratic morals and manners in successive periods resembles very much the course of life of a man who is continually trying to reform himself and as often slipping back into bad habits. This instability

* "Every person who shall fight or promote a duel or take any steps thereto, or who shall not do his best to prevent a duel shall if an officer be cashiered or suffer such other penalty as a general court-martial may award."

is characteristic of a class which is without ballast and devoid of any guiding motive or purpose, except, perhaps, a selfish desire to cling to power, and it is caused by the action and reaction of outside elements on a rudderless barque.

As the nineteenth century opens it is the landed gentry who come conspicuously to the front and occupy the most prominent positions. Many large properties had been built up out of the lands of the dissolved monasteries in the sixteenth century, and now, by a series of Enclosure Acts, passed during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, further augmentations were made to the landed possessions of the aristocracy. While the old English village community began to disappear, the position of the landlords was greatly strengthened. They began to pose as proud, beneficent, and generous patrons, who had acquired their possessions by acts of pure justice and wise forethought, and whom Providence rightly favoured as the proper guardians of the land of Britain. No historian cared to record the actual process through which they had come by their vast estates. The cry of the dispossessed and downtrodden poor of the countryside was carefully stifled, so that even those who inherited the estates knew nothing of the facts, and the outside public were led to believe that somehow for countless ages these acres of landed property had been handed down from generation to generation by legitimate right. The truth at last is beginning to be un-

earthed. Documents showing acts of deliberate robbery, of petty tyranny, of oppression and cruelty are being brought to the light of day, and will help to demolish one of the last superstitions which surround the landed aristocracy.*

It must not be supposed that during these two centuries—that is to say, from the early seventeenth to the early nineteenth century, the aristocracy was a harmonious and united body, calmly ruling the country without internal dissensions. There were at all times, as is well known, sharp divisions which split fashionable society and all men of note into two antagonistic camps. The Cavaliers and Roundheads in Stuart times settled their differences on the field of battle, and though the small body of the nobility that existed in those days was almost entirely on the Royalist side, there were many gentlemen in the social sense who could be counted among the Parliamentarians. In early Georgian days equally serious differences divided the Jacobites from the Hanoverians. The adherents of the cause of the exiled King and his successors were engaged in incessant schemes and secret machinations for undermining the position gained by their opponents. Society was honeycombed with plots and intrigues. The upholders of the Protestant faith and constitutional monarchy were at daggers drawn with those who had hopes of a restoration of the Stuarts. But after Culloden the Jacobites were reduced to a very small band.

* See "The Village Labourer," J. L. and Barbara Hammond.

The House of Hanover was generally accepted, and the aristocracy began to close its ranks. The Jacobite families could not remain any longer excluded from their share in the government of the country. They were a formidable body; they had great influence, and when their cause was to all practical purposes defeated they accepted the inevitable, and hastened back to claim their part in political administration and executive power.

Having united on the question of the succession to the throne, the upper class divided up once more into two opposing factions struggling for supreme control under the names of Whigs and Tories. Though civil war was not to break out again, the social as well as the political cleavage was deep and almost unbridgeable. There was no intercourse between political opponents. Their hatred of one another was genuine and bitter. But whichever party was in power, it was aristocratic rule. Those families who had been Jacobite until the defeat of the Pretender joined the Tories, while the Whigs, by espousing the cause of freedom and opening their ranks more widely for the entrance of the middle class, were preparing the field for a new force. Their progressive and enlightened views and their courageous handling of political questions made the Whig leaders, aristocrats though they were, very exceptional. They were ready to prepare for the sacrifice of the supremacy of their own class to a more representative form of govern-

ment, in which the people, hitherto entirely excluded, could in some measure participate. Had they known what this would eventually lead to, fewer, perhaps, of them would have been so ardent. In the early part of Queen Victoria's reign, although the Court at first favoured the Whigs, the Prince Consort tried to unite the opposing forces against the new democracy, which was just beginning to show signs of life. "The leading Whigs," the Prince noted, "were very much dissatisfied with the company they find themselves thrown into and alarmed at the progress of democracy." * And, with evident satisfaction, he finds Lord Derby, on his resignation in 1852, "was ready to support, as far as he could, any administration which was sincerely anxious to check the growth of democracy." *

The vision, however distant, of a new force which was not aristocratic, and which, moreover, was likely to be strongly anti-aristocratic, was more alarming than any internal differences which had divided the governing class hitherto. For nearly two centuries they had been without rivals. That the people whom they had so generously but effectually dominated should show signs of insubordination must indeed have filled them with the gravest apprehensions. The very word "democracy" conveyed at first something very much akin to revolution, specially in view of the general awakening in Europe in 1848, and the people were still referred to as "the mob."

* "Queen Victoria's Letters," vol. ii.

But whichever of the alternative Governments were in power, every post was still exclusively held by members of the upper class.

In order to illustrate the argument effectively, the description of a few specimens of the governing class would be more illuminating than generalisations. But there is a particular difficulty about presenting a portrait of a gentleman at any given period in the past. If a well-known and prominent figure is chosen, it will be found at once that his qualities and defects make him in some way exceptional; he cannot be taken as representing a type, and he is not an average specimen. If he is not well known and prominent, it is rare to find sufficient material about him to make even a sketch.

For instance, dissoluteness and unscrupulousness may have been common enough characteristics of the Jacobean Court, but Buckingham, who was not lacking in these, had individual traits, such as his self-confidence, his recklessness, and his masterfulness, which made him altogether exceptional. Or take a man at the opposite extreme—Sir John Eliot, whose character constitutes, perhaps, the nearest approach to the perfect ideal of a gentleman that can be found in the history of those times, "with a mind exquisitely cultivated, and familiar with poetry and learning of his day, a nature singularly lofty and devout, a fearless and vehement temper." * His refinement, his

* "History of the English People," J. R. Green.

courage and eloquence were most striking and unusual. An ideal example is not a typical one. Charles I. was notably a gentleman, but it would be an unwarrantable insult on the gentlemen of the Stuart epoch to say that duplicity, meanness, and moral cowardice were common characteristics among them. An enthusiast, in his desire to defend the aristocracy, might point to the Duke of Marlborough. But there was nothing in the least typical about him. Both his marvellous powers and his deplorable greed and sordidness were unparalleled. Bolingbroke, again, is spoken of as a typical aristocrat. His want of depth and power, his superficiality as a statesman and as a philosopher, and his profligacy in some measure warrant this description. But the peculiar part he played, and the signal failure of his career, make it difficult to select him as an average specimen. Walpole is far too distinguished to quote as an instance of what country gentleman of that time were capable of doing, though, as with them, his real love was for "the table, the bottle, and the chase"; and Bute, talented though he was, is too notorious to single out for portraiture.

If the object were to eulogise the aristocracy and to show what splendid figures could be found among them, no finer instance could be given than Coke of Norfolk, of whom we are told: "There was in his character a remarkable simplicity and a complete lack of egotism which was infinitely lovable . . . devoid of all self-

assurance with regard to his own capabilities, he was decided in his views and unalterably consistent in his code of action. A passionate love of justice and of fair play; an unbroken attachment to civil and religious freedom; a hatred of all taint of oppression and coercion, of all intolerance and bigotry—these were the leading characteristics of his nature." *

If, on the other hand, one desired to cast obloquy on the aristocracy, instances in the eighteenth century would not be far to seek. One might describe the Duke of Wharton, whose viciousness was literally indescribable, or Simon, Lord Lovat, of whom Macaulay says that "history hardly recalls a baser figure." But this would be manifestly unfair. We are not concerned with hopeless profligates any more than with rare paragons. There are scoundrels in every class and in every period. The protagonist of the aristocracy might instance the inhumanity of Eldon to show the result of power being placed in the hands of a man of plebeian birth, or go back to Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, as a noteworthy instance of an adventurer of low origin.

It is unnecessary to press the point further. The same objection would arise at a later date were any attempt made to illustrate the argument by character sketches of, say, Wellington, Canning, or Melbourne. It is only in contemporary society that types can be properly

* "Coke of Norfolk and his Friends," A. M. W. Stirling.

described, because with abundance of material a sort of composite photograph can be produced without any one individual being isolated for dissection.

It is easy to overestimate the services of the aristocracy in the period we have briefly surveyed, because in every direction they are to be found in the forefront; their deeds of prowess and statesmanship are writ large in our history. One is liable to forget that they did not reach their eminent positions in an open field, but that it was with only a very limited number of their own kind that they had to compete.

It is due, perhaps, to the customs of their age and to the position they held that they seem to stand out as more cultivated, more forceful, stronger, and more spirited than their descendants, who were left to fight against the new force of awakening democracy in a fortress which was gradually to be stripped of its most effective armaments.

CHAPTER III

THE CLUB

Power and popularity of the governing class—Origin of the Club—Mug-house Clubs—White's—Almack's—The macaroni—The beau—The dandy—Other clubs—Their exclusiveness—Enormous extension of clubs in the nineteenth century—Contrasted with the café—Anti-domestic character of clubs—Their social and political influence.

THE complete monopoly of power by the aristocracy which grew from the Stuart period onward, and was an accomplished fact at the end of the eighteenth century, can be accounted for by the decline in the sovereign's personal rule and the absence as yet of any organised democratic sentiment. The nineteenth century shows the gradual mitigation of the authority of a governing upper class, but at the same time the process has been slower than might be expected, and has been checked by the strong influence of the aristocracy over public opinion. That the aristocratic ideal of government should be of such tough growth as to survive till to-day may seem surprising, in view of the saner and more rational opinions which have gained ground during the last fifty years. But it must

be remembered, that in addition to the very conservative nature of British public opinion, high society has always been popular, and has been guarded and defended by organised bodies interested in the conservation of the older method of oligarchic government. The nobility itself is a species of association prepared for mutual defence. But there was another sort of combination or union of individuals which has been utilised with considerable effect.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a social institution in the shape of "The Club" came to the front, and was very rapidly popularised. Throughout the century clubs increased in numbers, and were destined to exercise a strong influence not only on the lives but on the position of the particular class with which we are here concerned. Before the quality of that influence is analysed, a word may be said about the origin of these organisations which have played, and still play, such a prominent part in the life of a gentleman.

No doubt there were at all times meeting-places for men who were associated together, either by friendly relations or by professional interests. "All celebrated clubs were founded upon eating and drinking, which are points where most men agree, and in which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the airy, the philosopher and the buffoon can all of them bear a part." * In fact, the club had its origin in the tavern.

* "Clubs and Club Life in London," John Timbs (1872), from which other facts in this chapter are taken.

In the early seventeenth century Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Raleigh met at the "Mermaid." Ben Jonson and his friends were to be found at the Devil Tavern. "We went to Woods's (our old house for clubbing)," says Pepys, "and there we spent till ten at night." The Civil Club was started in the City three years after the Great Fire. The members met at the Old Ship Tavern, and appear to have first clubbed together for the sake of mutual aid and support.

There were also mug-house clubs, the chief of which was in Long Acre. This is described in "A Journey Through England" (1722): "Every gentleman hath his separate mug, which he chalks on the table where he sits as it is brought in . . . the room is so diverted with songs and drinking from one table to another to one anothers' Healths that there is no room for Politicks or anything that can sow'r conversation." All the same, the mug-house clubs were hotbeds of the most virulent political wrangling. In some cases clubs were formed chiefly for the indulgence of debauchery and profaneness. The most notable of these was the Hell Fire Club, of which the Duke of Wharton was a leading spirit. A Bill was actually introduced into the House of Lords for the suppression of this club. A number of other clubs formed in the seventeenth century served only a temporary purpose, but in the following century meeting-places became more definitely organised

for social purposes, and clubs were instituted which have survived to this day.

White's, in St. James's Street, still one of the foremost London clubs, was established as a coffee-house in 1698. During the eighteenth century it became a recognised meeting-place for the aristocrats, men of fashion, and politicians, and was instituted as a regular club about 1730. It was principally a gaming club where the play was very high. Lord Carlisle lost £10,000 in one night, and Sir John Bland "t'other night exceeded what was lost by the late Duke of Bedford, having at one period of the night lost two and thirty thousand pounds." Sir John eventually shot himself, and there were other instances of suicides as the result of gambling debts. "I have heard," says Swift in his Essay on Modern Education, "that the late Earl of Oxford never passed by White's [the common rendezvous of infamous sharpers and noble cullies], without bestowing a curse upon that famous academy as the bane of half the English nobility."

"The Dilettanti" was a dining club which was started about the same time as White's. The majority of the original members were "young noblemen or men of wealth and position between twenty and thirty years of age brimming over with fun and animal spirits." Horace Walpole said of them that the nominal qualification is having been in Italy and the real one being drunk.

Almack's, in Pall Mall, founded by a Scot named

Macall, "under the patronage of twenty-seven leading men of fashion," became very famous. Here, again, gambling was the chief occupation. "The gaming at Almack's," writes Walpole in 1770, "which has taken the *pas* of White's, is worthy the decline of our empire or commonwealth which you please. The young men of the age lose ten, fifteen, twenty thousand pounds in an evening there. Lord S——, not one and twenty, lost £11,000 there last Tuesday but recovered it by one great hand at hazard." They set to work very seriously at these gambling orgies. The gamesters took off their embroidered clothes and donned frieze greatcoats. They put on pieces of leather to save their lace ruffles ; and to guard their eyes from the light and to prevent tumbling their hair wore high-crowned straw hats with broad brims and adorned with flowers and ribbons ; they also wore masks to conceal their emotions when playing at quinz. Each gamester had a small stand by him to hold his tea, or a wooden bowl with an edge of ormolu to hold the rouleaus of £50 each. Our twentieth-century gamesters who begin their bridge in the morning do not quite push their play to this extreme. In addition to rank and fashion, Almack's contained members of intellect and culture, and many of the best-known men of the day were habitués. It was known later as Goosetree's, and Pitt and his friends were well-known figures at the gambling tables. The original "Macaronis" were members of Almack's,

which came to be known as the Macaronis' Club. Many men of political prominence were among them at first, and Charles James Fox was looked upon as their leader. But later on the type deteriorated, and the term "macaroni" was used for the fast and dressy young men of the day. The *Universal Magazine* for 1772 describes a macaroni. "He is the sworn foe of all learning, and even sets simple orthography at defiance, for all learned fellows who can spell and write sense are either queer dogs or poor rogues, both of which he hates mortally." His successor, the beau, was also a club produce, and not a very attractive figure either, "not high born, nor rich, nor very good-looking, nor clever, nor agreeable, but generally middle-aged men with large appetites, who sat in White's bay window, swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had most of them been patronised by the Prince Regent or Beau Brummel." They came also to be known as dandies. Their headquarters was Wattier's, a great gambling house that only lasted a dozen years or so. Their fame did not rest solely on social and sartorial distinction, they had a certain weight in the political world. George IV., who was in a great state on the eve of his coronation because the Queen had expressed her intention of coming to the Abbey, inquired what view the dandies took. He was informed that it was not favourable to him. "I care nothing for the mob,"

exclaimed the King, "but I do for the dandies." Accordingly, he propitiated them by providing a special breakfast for them in one of the rooms of the House of Lords on the day of the ceremony.

The so-called leader of fashion is a club type which continues to exist with very little variation, whether he is called a macaroni, beau, dandy, fop, blade, swell, masher, nob, dog, toff, card, or blood.

Almack's * was converted into Brooks's. Fox made it his headquarters, and the mark of a fashionable Whig was to live at Brooks's, "where politics were sown and in the House of Commons where the crop came up." † The great Whig Club stood on the opposite side of St. James's Street to White's, which was the headquarters of the Tories. Both of them have now lost their pronouncedly political character. The Carlton and Reform, founded in the early thirties, took their place as political centres. Now, again, the latter is hardly in touch with modern Radicalism, and other political clubs have arisen.

Boodle's, Arthur's, the Beefsteak were all of eighteenth-century origin, and a great many others were founded soon afterwards. Some had curious origins, like the Roxburghe Club, to which many members of the high nobility belonged. It claimed its foundation from the sale of the library of the Duke of Roxburghe in 1812. The avowed object of the club was the reprinting of rare pieces of ancient literature.

* A club with the same name has recently been established.

† Horace Walpole.

But this was never carried out to any appreciable extent, and the chief characteristic of the club was its expensive and elaborate dinners. But in this respect it could hardly vie with Crockford's,* where the cook received a salary of £800 a year.

It was the great success of these first clubs that created the vogue. Most of them in the beginning were very exclusive socially. The aristocrats and leading politicians, who, after all, were for the most part aristocrats, kept the election of members under their control. Surgeons, architects, and attorneys, and suchlike professional folk were not admitted. In 1835 we read, "Are there any literary men members of White's? None, except Croker. They are considered as vermin in the fashionable clubs." But there were clubs for authors and men of science and letters, such as the Royal Societies Club and the Literary Club, founded by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Johnson in 1764, and later the Athenæum.

Gradually in Victorian times clubs came to be founded for every conceivable object. There were those devoted exclusively to the Services, as a shelter had to be found for the vast number of half-pay officers. There was an increase of political clubs, a number of new sporting clubs, artistic and bohemian clubs, clubs to meet the social needs of professional men of all sorts, ladies' clubs, and at last even working-men had

* Now the Devonshire Club.

the audacity to start their own clubs. There is now hardly room for the movement to go much farther.

It appears, therefore, that originally clubs were simply convivial in their object and chiefly aristocratic in their membership, though men of letters had their meeting-places as well. Gambling was the main occupation in many of them, but this was very much mitigated after the report of the House of Commons Committee on gambling, of which Lord Palmerston was chairman, and which led to the closing of several of the worst houses.

But from the earliest time clubs were found to be of immense value politically, and later on the sporting world and various professional interests made use of them. So far as the gentleman is concerned, the influence of the club as a social institution, whether it be a service club or a sporting club, is very considerable. As democracy increased its hold the tendency was not for the aristocratic clubs to open their doors wider and renounce their social prejudices, but for a larger number of clubs to be founded. The man of letters, the man with a profession, the middle-class commercial man did not go on hammering at the door of White's, or Boodle's, or Brooks's, and does not attempt to force an entrance into the Turf, the Marlborough, the Bachelors', or the St. James's. He has made his own club, and only when he gets money and leisure has he any ambition to be admitted into the more select houses

Such has been the increase in number that to-day in London alone there are no less than 108 houses described as "Principal Clubs." Only about half a dozen of these were founded before the nineteenth century. Over fifty are exclusively or mainly social, and have between them a membership of well over 50,000. There are forty-four clubs with an annual subscription of £10 and over, and twenty-five have an entrance subscription of £30 and over. Of these expensive clubs five are reserved for officers of the Navy and Army.

Though many men are members of several clubs, these figures help to show how the club by its large extension has become a sort of permanent national institution. Not only in London is this the case, but to a minor extent in the provinces also. This form of association was far more quickly developed here than on the Continent. But foreign countries have now adopted the idea, borrowed the word, and in European capitals a fair number of clubs have been founded. Where any number of British visitors meet together in a holiday resort abroad there is quite sure to be a club.

Our love of sports and games, for which corporate action is essential, will account largely for the growth of a good many of these establishments in this country, and of course the general rise in the standard of wealth of the community made the spread of such a luxury possible.

Moreover, we are by nature very sociable, and we like joining with others for enjoyment as well as for business. We have, perhaps, a special talent for organising bodies of men for a special purpose. On the other hand, except in the famous case of Holland House, the political salon has never flourished to any appreciable extent in this country, nor have we ever developed the free and easy intercourse of the café, which is a well-known feature of continental life. Abroad men of all stations frequent their favourite haunts, where they are sure to find congenial company. They seem to like the tavern and coffee-house stage of club development, and probably prefer it as being far more economical. With us the café has never succeeded. There is nothing between the stiff oppressive hotel and the stench of the glaring public-house, with its absurd arrangement of bars and saloons, and its hopeless discomfort. In their desire to establish some common meeting-ground our upper classes have shown that they know how to look after themselves, as the palaces of Pall Mall and St. James's Street will testify.

It would be interesting to know whether this enormous extension of club life during the nineteenth century has not been on the whole anti-domestic in its operation. Were there no other signs of this it might at first appear rash to come to such a conclusion, for it can be argued that bachelors are the chief frequenters of clubs, and that, even for married men, the club can quite

well serve a useful purpose. Anyhow, it would be difficult to estimate what number of married men have been lured away from their homes by the counter attractions of their clubs. It is, however, likely that a comfortable and spacious building, with its shaded lights, warm fires, noiseless waiters, handy drinks, large choice of newspapers, and general atmosphere of discreet attention must attract the always rather materially minded male, more especially if his home contains any unusual number of the elements of domestic strife. There are, however, many other signs of the anti-domestic tendency of the age. The multiplicity of restaurants, the increased popularity of hotel life, and the facility for short visits and frequent travel—all of these militate against the hearth and home. Domesticity, in short, is coming to be regarded more and more as humdrum, because it is uneventful and quiet.

This is part of a huge fallacy that is captivating society. Constant movement, constant change of company, constant alteration of scene, constant variety of pursuits, constant distractions give a spurious sense of activity and prevent reflection, a form of mental effort which so many quite unconsciously spend their lives in trying to avoid. Every one, indeed, supposes he is "doing more" because he can move more rapidly. Whereas it would be nearer the truth to say we accomplish less, because our nervous energy and vitality are being seriously impaired by the whirl and rush of ceaseless mechanical motion.

Many agencies may have been at work to produce the modern indifference to domestic ties. But there can be little doubt that the club, which has taught many men that outside their own homes they could find comfort, good living, good company, and good cheer, must have contributed very materially to this marked change in our social life. Nevertheless, some may claim that this apparently anti-domestic inclination is only the beginning of a co-operative method of dealing with the problems of housekeeping and domestic servants, and that the separate household, with its unnecessary trouble and waste, is to be absorbed in time by a system of co-operative households with an associated method of catering and management, the home being reserved for those who prefer privacy and seclusion. But this is carrying speculation too far into the future.

These wider considerations must be set aside, as the object in introducing the subject of clubs is only to show another sort of influence of a more positive and noticeable description, which is exercised by the best-known and more expensive establishments. Here it is that young men learn how to make lives of idleness endurable, and middle-aged bachelors become inured to the barren routine of a vacant life. Had they not this warm and comfortable retreat it is conceivable that some of them might have to exert themselves to do something. As it is they while away the hours playing cards, gossiping, and

associating with others who are also whiling away the time with cards and gossip. Till at last they get a general impression that the world that matters consists only of such people together, of course, with those of whom they read in the sporting and society papers. The hurrying throng they sometimes watch with a vacant stare from the arm-chairs in the club windows are just passing shadows, meaningless and outside the focus of their narrow vision.

In their corporate capacity purely social clubs have a markedly conservative tone and influence. For in binding together men of like views, they help to preserve obsolete ideas, and give continued life to opinions of a past generation. The young man who comes in and sits on the fender in the club hall will hear the topic of the hour discussed in a way he approves. He would not join a club where he was bound to hear opinions that constantly jarred on him, and any one holding such opinions would not be likely to be elected a member of his club. It is this very strong social influence that makes the club system of special interest and importance in the development of moral, political, and intellectual ideas, and of habits and fashions. Outside the openly political clubs, while some few may claim to disseminate advanced notions and progressive doctrines, there are very many more—and they are the most powerful—whose unavowed object it is to preserve the present social order and oppose change. The inability of Brooks's

and the Reform to keep in touch with advancing radical and democratic opinion is very significant, and illustrates the essentially aristocratic nature of the higher class club atmosphere.

Nothing consolidates a point of view, a spreading idea, a militant cause, or a passing fashion so readily and so effectively as the association in easy social intercourse of men of like opinion, with a common interest and mutual sympathy. Isolated individuals depending only on special effort, and without the opportunity of coming into contact with those of like mind, are deprived of an easy means of obtaining encouragement in their views, and of an engine for the spread of these views, not necessarily by way of deliberate propaganda, but by the persistent force of united action and common agreement. The gentlemen of the day, apart from any deliberate political action, can, by social pressure, which may even be unintentional, set a very distinct tone, adopt a fixed standard, and insist more or less on certain opinions being held in their clubs, so that it can be made extremely uncomfortable for any one who neglects to adopt the tone, objects to the standard, or refuses to accept the opinions.

As already stated, clubs have now spread to all classes of the community. They each have their particular complexion, characteristics, and traditions. But there is a very great distinction between a club for busy men of moderate means, who spend their few hours of leisure in the

relaxation of friendly intercourse, and the club for men who are well enough off to have little or nothing to do. By far the strongest influence will continue to be exerted by these superior clubs for the leisured class, where precious hours and days fall heavily on the hands of so many idle men. Being select and exclusive, they help to consolidate class divisions, because membership depends on social position and the possession of considerable means, and they attempt to preserve intact a strongly conservative and anti-progressive point of view. It is, in fact, one of the many methods by which the upper class are enabled to entrench themselves in a position of aloofness ; and by the interchange of opinions and the preservation of habits, both social and mental, they can the more easily resist any attack on their privileges. Thus it is that their clubs, which have money tests and aristocratic leanings, are of more use to them than perhaps they realise.

CHAPTER IV

THE OLD NOBILITY

Change of type—Mid-Victorian aristocracy—Their characteristics—Their manners—Their view of riches—Their domestic life—Education—Decline of power—Rise of middle class—Social changes—Aristocrat's reply to attack on his caste.

Before we reach our contemporaries some attention may be given to the immediately preceding generations so as to illustrate the last transition and the most recent change that has taken place in the character of the governing class. Changes in methods of government, the inventions and discoveries that have revolutionised the industrial world, alterations in the style of art, architecture, or literature can be all traced to specific causes and attributed to distinct periods and dates. But the consequent or concurrent transformation in the personal characteristics of the various social strata is more difficult to detect. It is a continuous process to which each succeeding generation contributes. It has no abrupt commencement or termination, and only becomes apparent after the lapse of time. You

cannot watch a plant growing, but you can see that it has grown. A type arises, lasts for a time, and then is superseded: it is practically impossible to point to the date of its origin or of its decline. But when with twentieth-century eyes we look back on late nineteenth-century society, to all of us, whether we are inclined to discern an improvement or deterioration, anyhow a marked change is apparent. It is true that we may not be fair judges, as the light of history is apt to give the softening and unifying perspective which may make a distant view pleasanter than it would be were its rugged details inspected at close quarters. But the mid-Victorian period is not so far back that we cannot have some precise first-hand, or, anyhow, second-hand, knowledge of an intimate and personal kind than is possible with regard to the time that is more remote from our own day.

Democracy was gaining ground, but the spread of popular education which was destined to be the real stimulant to its growth and energy did not take place till the seventies. The aristocracy, therefore, though they had lost immediate control over the House of Commons, were able still to look upon the extension of the franchise with equanimity. The privileged and prominent position they had held for centuries did not seem to be in imminent danger. The people, not yet articulate, submitted to a large extent to aristocratic rule. Though still guarding their

interests and convinced that their ascendancy was essential to the country's welfare, the aristocracy were no longer inclined, or, more correctly speaking, they no longer dared to be so rough and ready in their methods as their predecessors had been. The awakening of the people had begun. The rare sixpenny daily paper which was handed round till it was worn to shreds was, on the repeal of the Paper Duties (1860), superseded by the penny daily. Information, if not knowledge, began to spread, and the general public was no longer kept in entire ignorance of what was taking place around them. They were beginning to scrutinise more closely the methods of their rulers, industrial problems were becoming pressing, and men were coming to understand something as to conditions under which their fellows were living. It was impossible for those in active political life to ignore these considerations, although social questions did not yet occupy anything like the important place in the public eye that they do now.

The aristocrats of mid-Victorian days were not only still tolerated, but they were respected and even admired. Generations of leisured living, combined with great family traditions and acknowledged responsibilities, which were undertaken with conscientiousness if not with ability, produced a type which was often characterised by refinement, high-mindedness, and nobility of disposition. A certain distinction was the leading

note of this now almost extinct nobility. Distinction is difficult to define, the more so when one sees so few traces of it to-day. The aristocracy of those days was not yet quite in a false position, their assurance was therefore easy and natural, and their ignorance safeguarded them against the misgivings which a riper knowledge of affairs might have produced. Such ignorance nowadays is almost impossible, even for the densest mind or the greatest recluse. They did not require to hold themselves aloof in order to preserve their identity. They had no fear of being contaminated by mixing with their fellow-men. Although they were rarely intellectual, and the social needs of the nation existed in a remote region they very seldom penetrated, their sympathy and compassion had no flavour or patronage. They were ready to meet men as equals, or, anyhow, to seem to, and those who came into personal contact with them quickly succumbed to their charm. Such words as "aristocrat," "nobility," "upper class" seldom passed their lips. Scientific sociology did not trouble them, and they refused to acknowledge either in manner or speech that they were privileged beings or a class apart, though inwardly they were no doubt conscious of it, and politically they used what power they had. Socially, too, they remained very clannish, confining their choice on marriage, as a rule, to members of their own caste. They knew they had inherited certain responsibilities, but they

did not want this fact to give them artificial pretensions over their fellows. It would have been bad manners, and would have made them uncomfortable, and they hated to take what they would have considered an unfair advantage.

With their own kind these aristocrats were very strict and particular, making full allowances for every one else, with rarely any suggestion of superiority. Good manners were still most important, but they were the good manners which meant no "manner." What was vulgar, flashy, and coarse was not loudly condemned, but silently ignored. It was not a matter of argument, but of instinct. If a man did not recognise such things for himself, no power on earth would convince him. Prices, investments, and incomes were never mentioned. These were sordid details which were taken for granted. There was, no doubt, profligacy, extravagance, and appreciation of wealth as in every other age. But while the corruption and low standard of morality in public affairs had been superseded by a high level of personal integrity, the glorification of riches and the mania for senseless extravagance and ostentation were, as yet, unknown.

An instance of how riches were treated may be given, though again it may be said in quoting an instance we are more likely to hit upon an exception than an example. But Jowett's description of the Duke of Bedford, who died in 1891, shows how absolutely untainted

with vulgar ostentation some of the mid-Victorian aristocrats were :—

"He always retained in his personal habits the simplicity of a poor man ; wealth was rather an inconvenience to him. . . . He liked to do for others what they were unable to do for themselves ; to try, for example, experiments in agriculture which were beyond the means of ordinary persons. Yet he never valued himself on his good deeds, but would rather apologise for them. For he had a fixed opinion that it is far easier to do harm than to do good, and that doing good is usually more than counter-balanced by the attendant evil. It was a favourite expression with him, 'He did as little harm as he could help.' Sometimes when he gave hundreds and thousands he would assume the character of the receiver rather than the conferrer of a favour. He would write that he had 'scraped together' the money, or would apologise for the neglect of a post in answering a request." *

He was also an extremely cultivated man, and whether he is taken as an exception or a type of his times, he certainly has no counterpart to-day.

In the middle of the nineteenth century they still ruled their children with the method of stern, if not tyrannical, discipline. Time has still to show whether the reverse plan of giving the first place to children is going to prove more

* *The Spectator*, March 7, 1891.

successful. Illnesses and ailments were not considered fit subjects for conversation. In their ignorance of the elementary rules of health and hygiene they often sacrificed their children, and were almost cruel in their intolerance of physical weakness. But this was not peculiar to them. It was the habit of the age they lived in. They were almost as good sportsmen as their fathers, for sport was still a pursuit which demanded "thorough acquaintance with the habits of wild animals, sympathetic knowledge of dogs, and minute familiarity with features of a countryside." * It has not yet become a mechanical pastime for town-bred idlers.

With crinolines, trousers, ringlets, and whiskers had come in a propriety and punctiliousness which was a natural reaction from the rowdyism and dissoluteness of the preceding generations back into the eighteenth century; this produced a slightly pompous fastidiousness, but a decided rise in the moral tone.

Already during the previous century the rich wholesale merchant and the nabob had gained admittance into upper-class society and won their way into gentility. But the protest against the vulgarity of trade was kept up by the stricter aristocrats, who never attempted to compete in the professional world and did not dream of engaging in trade; they would have thought it derogatory to their caste. They just slipped naturally and easily into posts of importance

* "George III. and Charles Fox," Sir George Trevelyan.

in the Services and in politics, which were still reserved for them, and for which no special training seemed to them necessary, and as soldiers, sailors, politicians, and administrators they were able to leave their mark on history. "It is our wish," said Thackeray, "that there should be a race set apart in this happy country who should hold the first rank, have the first prizes and chances in all government jobs and and patronages. We cannot make all your dear children peers, but the young ones shall have everything a government can give, they shall get the pick of all the places."

The worst condemnation in their society was for anything to be "vulgar," and they had a supreme contempt for the parvenu. Their morals were by no means above reproach; irregular relationships were tacitly accepted, but there was no flaunting of vices or craving for vicious excitements. The Victorian Court set a sober but rather rigid tone of propriety, which may have been stiff and dull, but which had no traces in it of the flashy dissoluteness which began to permeate society later. The old type, with its courtly distinction, was favoured and appreciated. Domesticity was preferred to worldliness, but any undue interest in Art and Letters was regarded with suspicion. As a class these gentlemen were very badly educated, and though strides were being made in the world of Science and Letters, it was a rare exception for any of them to display any first-rate intellectual

ability. They had the fault of all aristocracies which are cut off from the great life of the people: a wondrous ignorance of the struggles and emotions of those who live and do not vegetate. Their distinction had merit because it sprang from a natural diffidence and stern uprightness in general conduct, which produce self-confidence, and not from arrogance, which breeds conceit. They played their part with an unobtrusive dignity, and by their endeavour to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of their fellow-men they gained their admiration, and in some cases their affection.

In matters of education they took very little trouble to supervise the training their children were to undergo, and they had no suspicion as yet that their sons and grandsons might not be as comfortably and easily provided for as they had been themselves. The children learned in their earliest days to reverence and respect their own class when they studied "Little Arthur's History of England":—

"The nobles of England are useful to the country. As they are rich enough to live without working for themselves and their families, they have time to be always ready when the King wants advice, or when there is a Parliament to make laws; or when the King wishes to send messages to other Kings. . . . As their forefathers were made nobles because of their goodness, wisdom, or bravery, they have in general followed their example; and they have

always, next after the King, been the people we have loved best, and who have done us most good. . . . So you see that noblemen have been of great use in England. When you are older you will understand this better, and you will find out many reasons to be glad that we have noblemen in our dear country."

Little Arthur is now grown up, and he is not quite sure that every one believes what he was taught.

As the century advanced the aristocracy were very gradually relaxing their hold as a political force. In 1867, and again in 1884, there were further extensions of the franchise. The middle class had occupied a position of predominance after 1832, and now the working class were beginning to make their voice heard. The aristocracy was not relegated to a subordinate position, but the golden age had obviously passed. Except in the persons of their leaders and statesmen who held office, their interest and participation in public affairs began to diminish. This shifting of the seat of authority became noticeable, and a writer * in the sixties comments on it with some alarm :—

"Of late the middle orders have been the sole creators, and they have been embarrassed by no factious opposition by the class which has parted from their former power ; but that the country has gained in dignity and elevation by these habits of sensitive retirement, by this exagger-

* Heron, "The Aristocracy and the People," 1862.

ated modesty on the part of the aristocracy in these days cannot be maintained. . . . The leaders of the people, the aristocracy, who were the political instructors of their time, had planned, laboured, exposed their persons and their fortunes to exalt the nationality, have of late altogether deserted their duty . . . the aristocracy have shrunk more and more into the pleasures of ease and retirement. The upper classes untrained in the vigorous exercises of politics as formerly, and immersed in the amiable pursuits of life, can hardly expect to be either the interpreters of high national policy or to offer any barrier to the tide of democracy when it approaches."

The tide was indeed rising. It was a hopeless task to attempt to stem it. A few boldly sided with the cause of reform, but the main body either held aloof or obstinately opposed the changes that were to deprive them of their power as a class. The middle-class politician had come to the front, his value was undoubted, and though he sympathised for the most part with the ideals of the Liberal party, which was already beginning to shed its aristocratic Whig section, he was also welcome in the Conservative ranks. He came to voice the views of his own class, but he came well equipped, specially trained, with natural talent, and with a habit of life that was uncontaminated by the excesses and frivolities of high society. He was by his upbringing a worker, and he regarded his parliamentary duties as serious business. He had come to stay.

The great abuses of patronage and recognised jobbing which were rife in the eighteenth century had much diminished. Purchase of commissions was abolished in the Army. The growth of local government and the establishment of parish, borough, and county councils brought to the fore a type of man who showed by his capacity and his mental calibre that he was likely to be a highly efficient servant, both in the executive and administrative branches of the public service.

The fact which in all ages had been patent and obvious in the world of science and the creative arts—namely, that the highest mental powers are to be found, as a rule, in those classes of society that have been accustomed to arduous work and severe training—was at last penetrating into the no less important art and science of government and administration. Hitherto tradition, custom, and, indeed, the law, prevented any chance being given to those who were not born in the purple, or who were not under the patronage of the great leading families. The change began to permeate the whole social life of the nation. The doctor, the parson, the lawyer, for instance, had been accustomed not long before to take their places silently and submissively below the salt. Now there was gradually ceasing to be any savour of inferiority in their social position, and with the painter, the musician, and the actor they were ranked on a footing of equality with every one else. Professional status

no longer disqualified for the social position of a gentleman, although the aristocracy would dispute any one's claim to be a gentleman unless he had the approved manner and *comme il faut* tone.

It was not till the last decade or so of the century that the possession of money, pure and unadulterated by merit, became in itself a sufficient qualification for admission to the peerage and through it to the aristocracy. Indeed, the reply of the aristocrat who survives from those times against the attack on his caste is not without reason. "You complain of the aristocracy," he says; "you condemn our houses and our establishments, and laugh at our lineage and traditions. But what are you setting up as a substitute? Men with ten times as much money, who can buy us out; men who keep up far more costly and ostentatious households, and whom we think vulgar and grasping and without distinction. You may have suffered under us in the past, but we rendered some service. You will suffer a great deal more under a plutocracy who, while rendering you no service at all, will not hesitate to exploit you. Moreover, as the mere possession of riches is an ignoble and selfish ideal which can be held out to every citizen in the State, you will find it more difficult to free yourself from the plutocratic yoke. You make use of our titles to set up this new style of social governance. And you call this democracy."

The nineteenth-century aristocrat may make

this protest, but his twentieth-century descendant will not join with him. The latter is bent on a friendly, intimate, and repaying alliance with the commercial plutocracy.

In his protest the nineteenth-century aristocrat is fully justified from his point of view. We want to prevent the fish falling into the plutocratic fire, but we do not intend to leave it in the aristocratic frying-pan. The whole question of titles must be reserved for a later chapter.

We are now approaching the period when a further inroad was to be made on the political power and privileges of the aristocracy. From the eighties onwards the country was closely occupied with Irish politics, and the public mind was being continually distracted by military expeditions and wars. The Conservatives, who were now becoming closely associated with and representative of the aristocracy, were able, with only a short break, to retain the power in their hands for twenty years. And it was not till the Victorian era was passed and a new century had dawned that the full effect of the influences and under-currents that had been at work all the time became apparent.

CHAPTER V

LORDS AND COMMONS

Decline of political power of the aristocracy—The Parliament Act of 1911—Events which led up to it—Reform Bill of 1832 the beginning of the change—Composition of House of Commons—Rise of Trade Unions—House of Lords unaffected by changes—The Liberal peer—Treatment of Liberal legislation by the Lords—The election of 1906—Conflict between the two Houses—The aristocracy and the Conservative party—The social side of political life.

The decline of the political power of the aristocracy is the keynote of the transformation they are undergoing. The change from being able to hold the reins of government by special privilege and unquestioned tradition to a state of affairs in which privilege and tradition count for very little must alter materially the position, the prospects, and the general outlook of the aristocrat.

It is for this reason that it will be necessary to allude briefly to recent controversial politics. Indeed, it would be impossible to omit all mention of the memorable struggle which culminated in the passage of the Parliament Act

of 1911, because it marks the latest stage in the prolonged conflict between aristocratic ascendancy and popular self-government. This aspect of the question was not sufficiently dwelt on in the turmoil of speeches and writings which raged around the controversy while it lasted.

The serious deadlock which arose between the two Houses of Parliament was not a mere inconvenience in the conduct of legislation, nor was it mainly a technical constitutional problem. The issue was not between the six hundred and seventy members of the House of Commons and the six hundred and twenty members of the House of Lords, nor between the Government and the Opposition. The full purport of the contest was broader and far more vital, and the settlement, though by no means final, was the outward and public manifestation of a social as well as a political change.

The growing conflict between an unreformed House of Lords and a reformed House of Commons was bound to become more and more acute. As long as the two Houses represented the same interests and the same class things could work smoothly enough, and the territorial aristocracy dominated without effort a silent and submissive people.

The Reform Bill of 1832, which was the real beginning of the change, freed the House of Commons from its entire dependency on the House of Lords. At the end of the eighteenth century more than three hundred members of

the House of Commons were virtually returned by the influence of a hundred and sixty persons, landowners and borough-mongers, most of whom were members of the House of Lords. The House of Commons at this time, as Sir George Trevelyan says, "swarmed with eldest sons, with cousins and nephews of great noblemen, who were patrons of family boroughs, and with wealthy squires who scorned a peerage but made it a point of honour to stand for their own county at the first general election after they came of age." *

A table drawn up in 1816 † states that out of a House of six hundred and fifty-eight members, three hundred were nominated by peers, and one hundred and seventy-one by commoners. In 1827, when Canning was trying to form a Government, Croker (who was Secretary to the Admiralty) gave him details as to the influence of the borough-mongers, and estimated the number of members nominated by them at close on three hundred.‡ By the provisions of the

* "George III. and Charles Fox," Sir George Trevelyan.

† Oldfield's "Representative History."

‡ "Number of Members returned to the House of Commons by the influence of some of the peers: *Tories*—Lord Lonsdale, 9; Lord Hertford, 8; Duke of Rutland, 6; Duke of Newcastle, 5; Lord Yarborough, 5; Lord Powis, 4; Lord Falmouth, 4; Lord Anglesey, 4; Lord Ailesbury, 4; Lord Radnor, 3; Duke of Northumberland, 4; Duke of Buccleuch, 4; Marquess of Stafford, 3; Duke of Buckinghamshire, 3; Lord Mount Edgcumbe, 4; besides at least twelve or fourteen who have each two seats. *Whigs*—Lord

Reform Bill not only was the franchise extended, but fifty-six rotten boroughs were swept away. There was something more in this than electoral reform. It was the first step towards alienation between the two Houses. There was a bitter fight at the time ; the Lords were naturally reluctant to lose their control over the Commons. It was far more convenient to have a subordinate House of Nominees than an independent House of possible Antagonists.

Outside Parliament the Reform Bill had inaugurated the political enfranchisement and emancipation of the people, and this, once begun, was destined to proceed further. The introduction of free education served more than anything, and is still serving, to create a self-conscious democracy fully alive to its great responsibilities, for knowledge means self-confidence and strength.

Another important factor which contributed towards the gradual liberation of the working class was the institution and rapid growth of Trade Unions. Before 1824 such combinations of working-men were regarded as illegal, and numerous Acts of Parliament were designed to

Fitzwilliam, 8 ; Lord Darlington, 7 ; Duke of Devon, 7 ; Duke of Norfolk, 6 ; Lord Grosvenor, 6 ; Duke of Bedford, 4 ; Lord Carrington, 4 ; and about half a dozen who have a couple of seats each." Adding to these the seats there were in the hands of Commoners, he makes a total of " two hundred and three in the hands of what may be called the Tory aristocracy. The Whig seats about seventy-three " (" Anecdotal History of British Parliament," Jennings).

prohibit and prevent the organisation of labour. The industrial disturbances contemporaneous with the French Revolution led to the passing of the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, which made all trade combinations illegal. By this means the Trade Unions, which were beginning to be formed among textile workers in Yorkshire and Lancashire, were kept down. The industrial revolution and the advent of machinery and specialised methods of production placed the workers in an entirely new and strange position. Although some of them had the vote, the vote alone without organisation, and more especially without the power of association, was of little use. From the Act passed in 1824 down to the Trade Disputes Act of 1906, a series of measures were passed legalising and extending the powers of Trade Unions. The new organisation of industry brought to the front a body of representative working-men who, as their responsibilities increased, fitted themselves for the task of expressing more accurately and more forcibly than was hitherto possible the needs and desires of the millions of workers who till then had been almost dumb.

The House of Commons, which had become free and independent, reflected to some extent in its membership the changes in social and industrial development, with the result that there was a decline in aristocratic membership and a corresponding increase in middle-class and working-class representation. For instance, in 1860 there

were a hundred and eight members who were either sons of peers or heirs to peerages. In 1905 their number was fifty-two. After the election of 1906 they were further reduced to thirty-three. Since that time the number has increased again slightly. Also there are now considerably fewer members than formerly who have been brought up at one of the large Public Schools. They still, however, amount to nearly one-third of the whole House. Meanwhile the middle-class members constituted a formidable acquisition to the House. Their training and equipment were of a far more serious kind than that to which the House had hitherto been accustomed. Soon they captured the majority of posts in the Government itself, and even in the Conservative party, with its aristocratic traditions, their services were found to be indispensable. Lastly the working class gradually got a foothold in the House. At first a few trade unionists came in as Liberals, but the Labour movement gained ground rapidly, and ultimately in 1906 an independent party of Labour representatives found a place in the new House of Commons, and came into existence as an organised political force.

But while these extremely significant changes were taking place in the Commons, the House of Lords, unlike any other institution in the whole country, remained unchanged and quite unaffected by outside circumstances. Its stagnation and immobility naturally made it increasingly hostile to democratic advance. The number

of Liberal peers, or peers who could remain Liberal under social pressure, gradually diminished. Since the Reform Bill two hundred and fifty-three peers have been created by Liberal Prime Ministers alone, and yet in 1911 a bare seventy could be found who, as Liberals, would support a Liberal Government.

The phenomenon of a Liberal after receiving a peerage becoming a Conservative, or anyhow of his son becoming a Conservative, is not uncommon. It is chaffingly suggested that in the rarefied atmosphere of the House of Lords they come to see the error of their ways. Some hold that advanced age begets an inclination towards Conservative ideas. But what is the real truth? The social pressure is too strong for them. They begin to realise very soon that Radical ideas are discordant in their new surroundings. If they are already, or if they become, county magnates and want to associate with other country gentlemen, or with the élite of society, they must conceal or abandon the advanced notions they at one time supported. If they advocate reductions in the Navy, attack the policy of Imperialism, favour land reform, or support the claims of workers against employers, they simply cannot expect to be called upon in the same friendly way by their neighbours. They will be given the cold shoulder, and in hundreds of small ways they will be made to feel uncomfortable. To this kind of pressure many succumb. Their sons, who may not be specially interested in politics and who want to

be in the swim, associate exclusively with the well-to-do upper class and swell the band of non-political Conservatives who form such a formidable battalion of supporters in the political Conservative party on critical occasions. It is a very good instance of how the power of our aristocracy works not so much through political conversion or a change of conviction, but by a slow constraining force which operates from all sides in a subtle way on the more intimate and private part of life and insinuates itself into domestic details, which to most men must be of paramount interest.

Whatever be the causes, the fact remains that the House of Lords, which continued primarily to be a great agrarian institution, increased its Tory majority and the number of Liberals dwindled. Consequently the friction between the two Chambers, caused by an ever-widening diversity of aim and interest, became more frequent. Peel admitted at the opening of Parliament in 1846 that it was "no easy task to ensure the harmonious and united action of an ancient monarchy, a proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons."

After 1832 the causes of conflict were many and various. The Lords showed uncompromising hostility to the cause of reform in all directions. For twenty-five years (1833-58) they repeatedly rejected the Bill for removing the disabilities of Jews and admitting them into Parliament, even as they had twice refused to

grant Catholic Emancipation before the Reform Bill. They were able to delay for thirty-six years (1835-71) the abolition of Tests, and so prevent the admission of Nonconformists to the Universities; and for seven years (1873-80) the opening of graveyards to Nonconformists was prevented. The abolition of Church rates was delayed for eleven years (1858-69). Only by the inclusion of the Paper Duty Bill of 1860 in the Finance Bill was it saved from destruction, and for two years the Ballot Bill of 1871 was opposed because it was a blow aimed at the aristocratic privileges of controlling votes. On the rejection by the Lords of the Franchise Bill in 1883, Mr. Bright declared that "their arrogance and class selfishness had long been at war with the highest interests of the nation," and he advocated as a specific remedy the curtailment of their veto, virtually the same plan as was finally adopted nearly thirty years later. It was on the occasion of their making a damaging amendment to the Parish Councils Bill of 1888 that Mr. Gladstone uttered his famous note of warning, in which he said: "Differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habits, and differences of fundamental tendency between the House of Lords and the House of Commons appear to have reached a development in the present year such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that, in our judgment, it cannot continue."

When the second Home Rule Bill was rejected,

Mr. Bright's plan was referred to again. But the Liberals were only in office for a very short period, and there was no time or opportunity to deal with such a critical question. The past, however, was not forgotten, and when the Liberals were returned again after ten years of Conservative rule, every Liberal was well aware that before long the same trouble would inevitably arise and that a settlement of the question could not be long delayed.

The electoral debacle of 1906 naturally caused great alarm in the Conservative world. Till then many who were accustomed to hold the reins of government in their hands, as if by right, had not fully realised that the control was slipping from them. The difference in the House of Commons of 1906, compared with its predecessor, may have been even more marked than the change in the House before and after the Reform Bill. The repression which the progressive cause had undergone in the twenty preceding years had generated a degree of energy which caused great alarm in the ranks of Conservative politicians when the outburst came. There were years of inaction to be made up for; there were false and reactionary steps to be corrected. However, even the Conservatives had been infected by the reforming spirit of the age. They had not remained quite stationary, but they had moved as little as possible for fear of disturbing existing interests.

New social reforms were now undertaken with

vigour and determination. Education, Land, Licensing, and the beginnings of further electoral reform each had its turn. The Church, the Landed interest, and the Liquor interest, all aristocratic concerns—though the last has a strong flavour of the plutocracy about it—found that their privileges and pockets were being attacked. The last barrier which had kept them sheltered from the masses was to be broken down. The power of Trade Unions was to be extended, the hours of labour to be reduced, small holdings created, land valued, plural voting abolished, and a fairer share of the burden of taxation placed on the shoulders of those best able to bear it. Surely this was revolution! In their despair they turned to the guardians of property in the Second Chamber to act as their champions. The Lords set to work at once and used their veto with unsparing hands. Each session they rejected some of the principal Bills that were introduced. A deadlock was created by their death-struggle with the Commons, and for a time they thought they had triumphed.

The Liberal Prime Minister declared, when they first adopted these tactics, "The resources of the House of Commons are not exhausted, and I say it with conviction that a way must be found, and a way will be found, by which the will of the people, expressed through their elected representatives in this House, will be made to prevail." *

* Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, House of Commons, December 20, 1906.

For five years after this warning, which was scoffed at, the Lords continued to exercise their veto with increasing frequency. They defended their action on each occasion, and claimed that they were exercising a salutary check on hasty and ill-considered proposals for legislation. At last they went so far as to reject a Budget, declaring that it went beyond the limits of a legitimate Finance Bill. Their action now made it impossible for a Liberal Government, if they retained the confidence of the country, to remain in office. Each provocative move on the part of the Lords was met by a counter move on the part of the Government, till at last the decisive phase of the dispute was reached. It will not be necessary to follow the various stages which led up to the introduction of the Bill, nor to relate the circumstances which made two General Elections necessary before the matter could be settled. Very little attempt was made by the Conservative party to defend the Second Chamber. The hereditary principle was thrown over and the need for reform was acknowledged. They pleaded against single-chamber government and against the withdrawal of all checks on revolutionary legislation.

A Bill was eventually introduced formulating a scheme to abolish the absolute veto of the Lords while reserving to them their powers of revision and delay. The country regarded the eventual passage of the Bill as certain. Such an expedient, in the opinion of the majority, was long overdue.

It was the measures that were to be passed in future under a Parliament Act, rather than the Parliament Bill itself, that roused the indignation of the Conservatives in Parliament. The excitement over the final passage of the Bill was almost entirely parliamentary, and was chiefly caused by the Prime Minister's threat to make use of the Sovereign's prerogative to create peers in order to overcome the resistance of the large Opposition majority in the House of Lords.

There was a small minority of peers who throughout fought boldly on the side of democracy. They may have been referred to in terms similar to those used by a character in Trollope: "There is nobody on earth I pity so much as a Radical peer who is obliged to work like a nigger with a spade to shovel away the ground from under his own feet." As a matter of fact, they were helping to sweep away some of the unauthorised privileges and obsolete powers which were rapidly turning their class into a target for the scorn, ridicule, and animosity of their fellow-countrymen, who had ceased to regard them as rightful rulers and natural superiors.

The final year of the struggle showed the desperate attempts of the ancient order to strain every nerve against the inevitable, and to thwart and destroy the projects and ambitions of those who represented the new thought and the new life of the nation. Though apparently successful at first, the rash action of the Chamber which

still represented the privileges and prejudices of the wealthier class and of vested interests only helped in the long run to hasten the day when they were to be deprived of their most formidable weapon.

Though they retain considerable powers, as they now have a statutory right of delaying measures, and socially they still hold undisputed sway, the aristocracy, by means of their own hereditary Chamber, can no longer prevent, by the exercise of the final veto, the wishes of the people from being expressed in the form of an Act of Parliament. Whatever trials democracy may have to undergo, it can no longer be subjected to constant defeat at the hands of a constitutionally organised force of hostile aristocratic opinion.

But the Parliament Bill can only be regarded as a temporary expedient and as a step towards further constitutional reform, which, whatever shape it may ultimately take, must inevitably sweep away the special legislative rights and privileges of the hereditary peerage.

In fighting their parliamentary battle, the aristocracy very naturally looked to the Conservative party to espouse their cause. Apart from political action, the social attitude of Conservatives towards the nobility and their relations is quite natural and rational. They regard them as their friends and allies ; their political ranks are filled by them ; they are quite aware of their shortcomings, and are not particularly proud of

them or impressed by them. Conservatives look upon them as a useful political asset, for they have a firm belief in the theory of the maintenance of aristocratic rule, and, moreover, approve the habits of a leisured class. But it would be very unfair to cast upon those who are Conservatives in politics the entire blame for the social subservience to and glorification of our aristocracy which exists in the middle class. In this respect their political opponents are just as much to blame as they are. Liberals profess to disbelieve in aristocracy, and yet they studiously occupy themselves in copying it. They pretend to have a healthy contempt for titles, while they shower them broadcast on their delighted followers. In their social functions they endeavour, quite unsuccessfully, to copy so far as possible the smartness and brilliance of a society which is bitterly opposed to them and despises them, and they at the same time condemn extravagance and ostentation. They have not yet shaken off the Whig tradition of being an aristocratic party themselves, though in fact they have ceased to be anything of the kind. There is something almost pathetic to-day in the stampede at a Liberal social gathering to catch a glimpse of the diamond tiara of the very rare Liberal countess.

While we may attack the Conservative party for their political action, the Liberal party are just as responsible as their opponents for the snobbish adulation and flattery of rank and

position which abounds. It is not the declaration of bitter hostility against any set or society that is wanted, nor the violent abuse of any titled individual. It is the convinced and uncompromising hatred of all the make-believe, shams, foolish vanities, silly trappings, abject devices that are smothering a body of estimable people who, freed from these encumbrances, might be well fitted for the performance of high duties and efficient service.

The social side of political life is a good index of the nature and the method of government. The Whig and Tory controversies of the past divided society very sharply at times, so that the adherents of one party were not invited to the houses of the other party, and might even not be on speaking terms with their opponents. Nevertheless, had democracy appeared on the scene as a force to be reckoned with in those days, they would have closed their ranks and sunk their differences in an alliance to resist an alien force inimical to their interests. Still indeed in these days, notwithstanding the existence of acute party dissensions, "Society" manages to unite some of the leading politicians on both sides, because class habit is stronger than political conviction. Mr. George Russell draws attention to this in one of his essays: "Politicians who are old enough to remember the days when political strife was earnest and even brutal are inclined to lament the softer conditions of modern controversy. They say—and certainly

there is some truth in it—that men who hospitably mix with one another in social life are disarmed when they come to attack one another in public, and that therefore the fight which ought to be fought out with all possible determination loses in vigour, earnestness, and interest." We should feel inclined to put it stronger than this, and say that a warm social friendship between political adversaries makes it impossible for the one to attack the other publicly with any depth of feeling, and therefore with any effect. Lawyers who are paid advocates can chat and chaff over their luncheon in the interval of a trial in which they have been heatedly abusing one another as opposing counsel. But undoubtedly it would come as a great shock to many of the rank and file supporters on either side of politics who are deeply in earnest if they knew that intimate social relations existed between prominent political antagonists. They would conclude, not without reason, that the social sympathy was genuine and the political antagonism sham.

Unless a politician is actually discussing current political topics, it is now considered correct that he should disguise what are called his party feelings. That is to say, in Parliament, on the platform, or when writing articles in the Press, he may put on his political convictions as he would a coat, which in the intervals can easily be taken off and hung up on a peg. But surely political convictions that are worth having

at all may not only colour, but may dye with an indelible stain, a man's entire outlook on all questions, be they domestic or personal, social or national, or even international. He need not be ashamed of the fact, for it does not deprive him of a sense of fair play, of a desire to be just, or of paying due regard to the views and arguments of those who differ from him. If politics is a game and political conviction a theoretical veneer or costume to don while playing the game, then it is easy enough to hobnob with your opponent and attack him with all the appearance of righteous indignation in the House of Commons. It is not, however, chance friendships between opponents that are to be deplored, for they may be based on natural circumstances, but it is the identity of aim and outlook and the under-current of sympathy which may exist between leading men on both sides, based either on aristocratic tradition or perhaps on a preference for an oligarchic rather than a democratic system of government. The complaint that whichever side is in power there is a tendency to unite by family and social ties the leading members of the " ins " and the " outs," so that they constitute a sort of governing clique, is by no means devoid of foundation.

A foreign observer, who has made a close study of British manners and customs, comments rather severely on this aspect of our party system :—

" Another striking characteristic of the English political world," he says, " is the perfect ease

and nonchalant audacity with which one half of the upper class separates itself from the other, enters the camp of the Radicals, converts their principles to its own use, and commences a half-hearted attack upon its own privileges, without renouncing any of the customs, feelings, and relations by which the unity of the caste is preserved. It is like a tacit understanding by which, while some of the garrison continue to hold out, others feign disloyalty, mingle with the assailants, ardently espouse their cause, and yet, in order to prevent the ruin and sack of the town, a catastrophe for all concerned, endeavour gradually to turn the siege into a blockade, delaying the attacks, sparing the citadel as long as possible, and delaying and finally humanising the inevitable victory." *

This may be exaggerated, but it is true that Conservatives in politics are not sorry to have aristocrats and rich gentlemen as opponents, because it prevents the cleavage being sharp and defined between the "haves" and the "have nots." The conflict now is one of principle, and not of caste and class. But the advent of Labour has brought the latter sort of class conflict more within the range of probability.

Also it must be noted that Cabinet government in an overburdened legislative assembly tends to over-concentration of power in the hands of the executive. The permanent Civil Service, partly recruited from this upper class, in close contact

* Émile Boutmy, "The English People."

with it, and blindly on the side of law, authority, and tradition, extends its influence and tightens the supremacy of the executive with bureaucratic bands.

Having wrested prerogatives first from the Sovereign and then from the aristocracy, the people must be on their guard not to allow the function of government to be usurped by a more or less self-constituted oligarchy depending theoretically on what is termed the people's will for their position, but finding it more and more easy to avoid consulting even the people's representatives with regard to its actions. Supreme Cabinet control may be a step further than monarchical or aristocratic government, but it must not be mistaken for complete democracy.

CHAPTER VI

HEREDITARY TITLES

Titles part of the national tradition—Titles in the past—The creation of peers—The nobility in France—Titles as a sign of public recognition—Increase of orders and decorations—The pride in hereditary titles—Coats of arms and crests—Succession to a peerage—Suggested Act for termination of hereditary titles.

However much the gradual absorption, or rather dissipation, of a social aristocracy may be desirable and even desired, there is always one practical difficulty in the way which must, as things stand, prevent its accomplishment. It is the existence of hereditary titles. Titles are accepted as part of the national tradition as much as the monarchy, the bicameral system, the Established Church, or the Standing Army. Their abolition would seem to be as impossible as the abolition of any of the others. Their existence does not rest on reasoned argument, but on historic tradition which, in a country which has a long consecutive history, amounts to an engrained superstition. There is a fascination in tracing the links of a long chain back into the past ; the fact that a man is the twelfth duke

or the fifteenth earl of his line appeals to the historic sense and rouses an appreciation of the picturesque. From an archæological point of view it is interesting, though not very important. But these rather thin and intangible considerations are of very little account as compared with the serious drawbacks which attend the custom of inheriting titles.

When the aristocracy were actually the rulers, leaders, captains, and governors, titles were natural and necessary. But in the days when titles were accurate designations the nobility was a very small class. To be ennobled was a high and special honour. "To whom more is committed," says a fifteenth-century patent of nobility, "a more perfect order of conversation and polity is expected." Dukes were very rare in early days. At the Restoration only three existed. But Charles II. gave several new patents for the title in his desire to ennoble his illegitimate sons. Except for about twenty years in and after the reign of Charles I., when there were five marquises, no more than three noblemen ever bore this title contemporaneously till the reign of George III. Nine was the largest number of viscounts before this reign. Earls and barons, the most ancient and also the most numerous orders of the peerage, have also increased greatly in recent years. The peerage as a whole was enlarged under the Stuarts from 59 to 150. Between 1700 and 1750 there were 42 further additions. George III. created

388 peers, and 28 of these were conferred as a form of bribe to secure the passage of the Act of Union. Since the Reform Bill 435 additions have been made to the peerage. The number of the whole peerage at the end of 1911 amounted to 709, of whom 602 were members of the House of Lords. The institution of the peerage may have saved us from the curse of a definitely constituted nobility as on the Continent—that is to say, a large class bearing arms, enjoying certain privileges, and all titled. Many families which would be reckoned as noble anywhere else are not reckoned as noble in Great Britain. All the same, the faintest and most distant connection with a peerage is made the most of to prove aristocratic relationship, and the titled nobility, even in the limited British sense, forms the pivot and mainstay of the aristocracy.

The ancient titles might have waned and fallen into disuse had it not been for the hereditary legislative chamber. The House of Lords required perpetual replenishing, the Sovereign ceased to be the actual and became only the nominal fountain of honour, and political leaders, in their attempt to secure a strong body of supporters in the Second Chamber, took into their hands the power of conferring the honour of a peerage on a certain number of their followers. Comparatively few, therefore, of the present nobility can claim the distinction of a long lineage. There is nothing sacrosanct about a

Georgian title, nor is there anything at all picturesque about a newly created peer, but the existence of a hereditary chamber furnishes the excuse for the continuance of hereditary titles.

Now we have reached a period when there is almost a complete consensus of opinion that an exclusive hereditary chamber is an anomaly that can no longer be tolerated, and a large body of opinion is declaring for the elimination of the hereditary element altogether. The one formidable obstacle to the gradual abolition of hereditary titles is therefore likely to be removed.

In a reformed Second Chamber, if a titular designation is adopted, the descendant of a lord of Parliament would not in any case succeed to his title. Some may say, Why trouble about titles at all, once you have got rid of a hereditary legislature? If people like them, let them have them. The remnant of the nobility in France go on calling themselves dukes and counts ; they exist in a backwater apart from the general stream of public life, and they do not signify one way or the other. But the French nobility, though they had in their day many privileges, such as immunity from taxation, never governed the country. When they were shorn of their privileges there was nothing left for them but retirement. Our aristocracy have held a very different position, and, in any case, even if it were possible, it would be in no way desirable to shunt any one class of the community permanently into a siding. Or, to take another

simile, it is as if part of a crew were clinging to a useless, cumbersome, old-fashioned hulk, which still with a few sails up and a tattered flag flying seems, in outward appearance, to have a false air of security about her, though she is no longer seaworthy, her rigging is antiquated and cannot stand the weather. The crew can do no good by sticking to the hulk, and there are shoals and rocks ahead. We do not want them all to be drowned, but we ask them to come and serve with others on board the strongly built ship that has superseded all others and is making headway through the rough seas and can weather the storm. But many ties prevent them. Some of these are of their own making. The cutting of this particular tie, it may be shown, perhaps, would not be so difficult as supposed, and is not so inconceivable as many would have us believe.

Rank, although its value is utterly fictitious, has an almost wider influence than wealth. It overshadows intellectual distinction and gives a man a start in advance of his fellows in most forms of national competition. But it must be granted that titles and honours appear to appeal in a curious way to men of all classes. Human vanity seems to demand something of the sort. They are, indeed, useful as a means of bestowing a sign of public recognition on individuals, so long as these individuals do not beg, pray, or pay for them. If they are not hereditary, they can be regarded

as an honourable form of promotion. But even in this case there should be some sort of reserve if they are to be of any value, and the tendency in recent years to shower broadcast knighthoods, stars, ribbons, medals, and crosses must result in making them cheap and worthless. The fact of a man whose name or claim to merit is quite unknown appearing in public bedizened, brooched, and buckled with numberless bits of metal and coloured ribbon must make him an object of ridicule and a figure of fun. The practice has never reached the absurd extreme to which it has been pushed in foreign countries, where soldiers, courtiers, diplomatists, and officials are literally plastered over with decorations, but they have already become common enough in this country to have lost all distinction. Only within the last thirty years six new orders, two new decorations, and several new medals (not war medals) have been instituted. The large membership of these four orders shows there is justification for saying that the craving for this really rather childish form of public recognition is on the increase.

The Victorian Order has some 870 members, the Imperial Service Order 475, the Distinguished Service Order 1,650, and the Order of Merit 17. Some of the old orders are restricted in their membership: the Garter, the Thistle, and St. Patrick include altogether under 70 members; but the Bath has been extended to 2,000 members, St.

Michael and St. George to 1,000, and in addition to these there are the Star of India (291) and the Indian Empire 414 (not including natives of India). This makes a grand total of nearly 6,800 decorated persons (not counting the recipients of war medals, the Victoria Cross, the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Volunteer and Territorial decorations and orders for women, or the vast band who receive ceremonial medals).

The outside public are quite ignorant of the subtle distinctions in the various orders, and in the grades and classes of those orders, and of what vital consequence they are to those who are affected. They know nothing of the depressed feelings of a man who receives a K.C.M.G. when he expected a K.C.B., nor the deep emotions of an aspirant to a C.B. when he is presented with an M.V.O. They may guess more easily the disappointment of a would-be baronet when he is made a knight. But far above them in the Olympian heights their imagination cannot penetrate, and they fail to appreciate the passionate desire of a baron to become an earl.

To pin on medals won on the field of battle, or the star of some ancient order of knighthood accorded for signal service, may properly give pride and satisfaction. But to have to wear stars and crosses which you cannot avoid receiving, to be presented with a medal because you happened to attend some function, and to have a number of letters of the alphabet placed after your name

on an envelope reduces the whole practice to a complete farce. Nor is it only the silly pride or sometimes genuine embarrassment at wearing these things that is a reason for complaint; the heart-burning, the scheming, the tricks, the plots, and the anxiety connected with the conferring and receiving of them are also highly objectionable features. The old orders were very select and were never supposed to have very much relation to merit. They were reserved as special marks of royal favour for the high aristocracy. But now orders are used as a definite method of acknowledging services. If merit in any line could infallibly be discovered, its recognition by such means might be desirable. But true merit when discovered often refuses recognition of this sort. In fact, the more the custom increases the more do the really meritorious despise such honours. It may safely be said that if a reliable test were humanly possible it would be found that a very large number of these decorations and titles go to the wrong people.

But with such distinctions as these and with life titles we need not be specially concerned, though they all help to maintain the fabric of class. It is the *hereditary* title that tends to draw the nobility into a caste and rails them off from the people. Titles, though worthy men possess them and have had to accept them, set up a vulgar and empty ideal for the shallow-minded to aspire to, multiply the artificial differences between one man and another, and breed

an immense amount of ostentation and vulgarity in the bearers and fawning obsequiousness in those who look up to them. The pleasure of saying "M'lord" is almost as great as the pleasure of being addressed as "M'lord." Incredible as it may seem, to have intercourse with a live peer genuinely gives some men infinite pleasure, and few have any idea of the intense delight that some other men feel in being lords or becoming lords. They will cover their spoons, their notepaper, their book-plates, their seals, their carriages, their linen, and their footmen's buttons with coronets, and even insert stone coronets on the outside of their houses and metal coronets in the ironwork of their gates. They will have their portrait painted with a coronet on a table by their side, and every opportunity is taken to remind them continually of their rank.

But these coronets and crests and arms and mottoes are all sham imitations of something that was real only in mediæval times. There are many who pretend to trace family links into the remote past by means of these symbols, and claim armorial rights and armorial privileges for certain families. But "Armory," as Mr. Oswald Barron says,* "is not a living science. Armory was stricken when the mediæval period had its death-wound, and as a living thing it cannot be said to have survived our last civil war. The ingenuities of the official guardians of heraldry have reduced the arms of our English families

* *The Ancestor*, 1903.

to a welter of contradictions and misapprehensions. We wear no coats of arms on our backs, we carry no shields on our arms, nor crests on our heads. We say deliberately that there is nothing in the modern practice of armory which should appeal to any soul with wits above the level of a postage-stamp collector's." Just as hereditary stewards, hereditary cooks and cellarers, hereditary falconers and keepers of ducks in St. James's Park have ceased to exist, so all hereditary titles should be allowed to pass away, with the rest of the trappings of a once powerful aristocracy. They only help to prolong the fictitious belief in a superior governing nobility. They never have been superior; they have ceased to be governing; is there any reason that they should continue to be noble? "Rank and precedence forsooth!" Thackeray exclaimed; "the table of ranks and degrees is a lie and should be flung into the fire. Organise rank and precedence! That was well for the masters of the ceremonies of former ages. Come forward, some great marshal, and organise equality in society and your rod shall swallow up all the juggling, old, court goldsticks."

Every man is at liberty to choose his trade or profession. No man need accept any office against his will. Even the heir apparent to the throne may renounce his claim to the succession. But for the eldest son of a peer, if he survives his father, there is no way out. Whether he likes it or not, he must become an hereditary

legislator; he must succeed to the title. "The world supposes him to be the fortunate heir of what is called the accident of birth, and he is in reality the hapless victim of the accident of death. He has become a peer. From this lot there is no escape." *

If he is a Member of the House of Commons and his father is a peer of the United Kingdom, he must leave the House of Commons, however much he may be desirous of continuing his career there. As a commoner he has ceased to exist. "Because a man's father or grandfather or ancestor at some bygone period (a period measured in some cases by hundreds of years) was ennobled as the reward of service to the State, he is himself upon succession to the title, about which in the majority of cases he was by the necessity of things never consulted, prohibited from ever afterwards continuing or resuming that service to the State in the legislative assembly by which the State is governed—viz., the House of Commons." † Surely a free citizen of the British Empire should if he so wishes be allowed to refuse the burden of a coronet and the disguise of a robe. In no other walk of life does this inexorable compulsion exist.

If the nobility were allowed the option of either renouncing their hereditary titles or their claim to succeed to such a title, would any take

* Article by Mr. Curzon, Mr. Brodrick, and Lord Woolmer, *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1894.

† Ibid.

advantage of such an option? It is not improbable that some would. A title is conferred, let us say, for some conspicuous, generally appreciated, national service, the name of the holder of the title may become a household word, and in succeeding generations his services are gratefully remembered. But this remarkable man's descendants may be very ordinary mortals, perhaps rather below the average. Apart from the idea of their succeeding to a great title being somewhat grotesque, is it not a very embarrassing burden to cast upon them? It is surely rather humiliating for them to be perpetually compared with their distinguished predecessor to their own discomfiture, and to feel conscious that every one is saying, "Just look at the present Duke of A., or the present Lord B., compared with the great Duke of A., or the splendid Lord B." Their titles overweigh them and make them top-heavy. They are constantly singled out for recognition in public; an incognito is impossible with the camera round the corner as they leave their front-door. This may be the penalty for fame and great achievements, but it is hard that men and women who have no remote claim to renown and, like the vast majority of their fellows, are incapable of great achievements should have to suffer. Would not some of them be only too grateful to remain in name what they are in fact, just very ordinary mortals? In addition to these there are surely a fair number of peers who are bored to death with their title and would

very willingly give up the very doubtful privileges attached to it, and free themselves from the band of sycophants that swarm round the nobility like flies on a decaying carcass. The tradesman might knock off his extra 25 per cent. which is reserved for noble customers, and they would find many other reliefs in ridding themselves of unearned distinctions.

Family pride or pride of race might prevent some from taking advantage of such an option. There is satisfaction apparently in looking up at a family portrait in an old house and saying, "There is the first bearer of my name ten generations ago; I am directly descended from him; my family have always lived here and my son will succeed me." There are not very many who can say that, and some who can have no title at all and find every bit as much satisfaction in the archæological interest of a line of long descent as they would if they were dukes. But without wounding these noble susceptibilities, we may perhaps ask that future generations shall become accustomed to the idea that the hereditary title has joined the armorial bearings, the crest, and the motto—is curious in an archæological sense, but has ceased to be a reality. And the future inheritor of the old house, if he chances to be interested in his family history, will look up at the portrait of his early twentieth-century ancestor and remark, perhaps, with a sigh, "In those days we were dukes." This would be the only change. Sentiment alone would

be wounded by the disappearance of hereditary titles.

To effect the purpose we require an Act of Parliament, giving option to the living generations and imposing compulsion on unborn generations, in order to release the present holders of titles from the disadvantages and disabilities which have been imposed upon them without their consent, and to safeguard the future generations against the handicap of unmerited privilege.

The Bill might so be drafted as to refer to hereditary titles held by any of his Majesty's subjects. The 1,085 baronets would not be spared. After the passing of the Act it would be lawful for any holder of an hereditary title to disclaim the peerage, baronetcy, or whatever it might be. And no heir or descendant would be entitled to succeed to a title thus disclaimed, which would absolutely cease. Further, any heir or heiress to any peerage, baronetcy, or hereditary title born after the passing of the Act would not be entitled to succeed on the death of the last holder born before the passing of the Act, and again the title would, as lawyers say, "cease and determine."

This would be simple enough. Yet by many it would be regarded as an extreme if not ridiculously impossible idea. What seems ridiculous to-day, however, may in a few years' time be accepted as quite rational and normal. If hereditary titles are allowed to remain, it is use-

less to expect any lowering of the class barriers which now exist, and snobbishness will continue to increase unashamed as long as the chief food on which it thrives is preserved as an honoured national institution.

Were such a measure as suggested passed into law there would be no sudden change. The transition would be gradual, offending the feelings of no living person, and removing a perhaps picturesque, but certainly troublesome, incubus from posterity. Their little pedestals having been removed, the aristocracy would be released from the suffocating adulation of their multitudinous satellites, and would enjoy far greater freedom and far less constraint once they found themselves on a level with their fellow-men, unencumbered by an empty nominal distinction.

Are the gentlemen of to-day prepared to take such a step? It is to be feared that many of them are not. Deprived of real power and finding their popularity on the wane, they will hold fast to the last vestiges of their old glory lest they should sink into entire obscurity. A party of ascendancy will never relinquish its advantageous position without an obstinate struggle. Some pretend to believe in all the old fictions. A peer recently declared that people in distant lands, who were free from the prejudices of our political controversies, "appreciated at once the difference between a gentleman and the gentleman who was something more—a nobleman with a long lineage." If there are many who agree

with him, they will certainly not desire to relax their hold on the label which informs the world that they are "something more" than gentlemen. Some still may be found who would be ready to repeat the old hackneyed lines attributed to Lord John Manners:—

> "Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
> But leave us still our old nobility."

Meanwhile we continue with conscientious regularity to pray in church (though despair may be growing in our hearts that our supplication seems further than ever from fulfilment) that "all the nobility" may be endued "with grace, wisdom, and understanding."

CHAPTER VII

THE ARISTOCRAT OF TO-DAY

Contrast between aristocrats of to-day and their predecessors —Their fear of democracy—Restlessness of modern life —Loss of distinction—Three sections of the aristocracy— Money—Land—Birth and noble blood—The peerage— Merit—The qualities of a gentleman—The combat of the aristocracy with the new forces—Want of education.

The serious weakening in the political power of the aristocracy is likely to alter their position and their character still more as the twentieth century advances. The change has come about in due course without disturbance, and will continue further by natural steps, although the line of progress in this respect will always undulate as a result of the forces of action and reaction. Even in fighting the battle to retain their ascendancy the nobility and aristocracy showed themselves as a body with a very few individual exceptions poorly equipped intellectually, blind and ill-informed. They are out of sympathy with progressive thought, yet many of their followers cannot fail to recognise that stagnation is fatal. They fear democracy, and constantly invoke the nightmare of some hideously

painted monster they call socialism. They stop their ears to what they describe as popular clamour, and strive to remain isolated in their own fool's paradise.

"Apparently they are not only proud they do not understand, but also proud that they understand that it is better not to understand." * When their interests come into sharp conflict with the interests of the people they are being forced to give way. They look for the day when the party that champions their cause may be returned to power, and when they may hope to have some of their privileges restored to them. Although they may point to the past when distinguished members of their order held prominent positions, they must remember that in those days they were without rivals. They held undisputed and unrestricted sway in a field which had become their own preserve. Now that many of them have to compete with the common herd, they are showing themselves singularly ill-prepared and utterly outclassed, not because they are constitutionally devoid of talent or ability, but because the preparation of their minds and their general education is so deplorably neglected.

Indeed, the modern aristocracy are made of very different stuff from their predecessors. The type has deteriorated with surprising suddenness. The grace and tact, the fineness and courtliness of previous generations have vanished. In their leading characteristics our twentieth-

* Price Collier, "England and the English."

century aristocrats show that the very existence of a leisured, privileged class to-day entails the absorption in it of some of the worst social qualities which we as a nation are capable of producing. Gentleness and sympathy have given place to condescension and patronage, deference and courteousness to arrogance and conceit. Where the father or grandfather was *grand seigneur*, the son or grandson is *bon prince*, in other words the old unassuming dignity is superseded by patronising pomposity. Their manners and speech, their self-complacent pride, would have made their fathers blush. Prices and incomes are very important considerations with them, and the Stock Exchange is closely watched. Finding their chances of reserving posts of public importance for themselves diminishing, they are, as already pointed out, inclined to fall back on money as a power they can wield with some effect. They frequently marry only with a view to gaining this power. American and commercial wealth are brought in to bolster up their declining fortunes, and they welcome into their ranks many whose sole claim to prominence is the magnitude of their riches. Thus the contagion of a vulgar commercialism spreads.

About fifty years ago W. S. Landor declared, "Never have I seen more perfect gentlemen than among the English nobility." To-day it will be more appropriate to use the words of Dean Stanley: "There is no earthly thing more mean

and despicable in my mind than an English gentleman destitute of all sense of his responsibilities and opportunities, and only revelling in the luxuries of our high civilisation and thinking himself a great person."

They are obliged to have a closer knowledge of domestic politics than their parents had, in order that they may arm themselves against progressive democracy, which they regard as a hostile force. "Democracy," as the Duke of Northumberland says, "is simply that kind of government which invariably prevails in one form or another in the decay of a State." * Their growing unpopularity is a consequence of the defensive attitude which those not sure of their ground tend to assume. Finding the stream of popular feeling turning against them, they are becoming defiant, and descend from their pedestals not to mix with the throng, but to terrorise and cajole them. It would be unfair to blame them for being victimised by the craving for publicity and advertisement, which is one of the ugliest features of our time. The very gang that wants to toady and extol them only succeeds in making them look ridiculous and contemptible. While we read of their forefathers in the mellowed pages of memoirs and letters, we are supplied with intimate details of their own lives recorded with illustrations for monthly, weekly, and even daily consumption. Unfortunately, there are many more of them who submit to

* House of Lords debate, May 16, 1911.

and even enjoy this treatment than there are who protest. Even one generation back a peer expressed his utmost disgust at finding a list of one of his house parties published in the newspapers.

The old aristocracy were sometimes regarded as patrons of literature, but this is a function their successors have entirely abandoned. Theirs would be the last opinion to be consulted on literary matters. Any one must be struck in visiting an old country house to see on the library shelves a full collection of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature—Clarendon, Robertson, Gibbon, Scott, Byron, Bewick, Thackeray—but on the tables, for the daily consumption of the present owners, magazines, vulgar weekly periodicals, and a few lending library novels. They are no longer classical scholars like their grandfathers, and the time has passed when a false quantity would be met with jeers in the House of Commons. The gentleman of to-day cannot quote Latin or Greek, nor has he filled the blank with a proficient knowledge of anything else.

Here and there, it is true, the old distinction of the past may linger in some quiet corner, but if it does it is in a sad and depressed retirement. The atmosphere of hustle and rush, in which most of them now live, may perhaps prevent their developing the qualities which belong to a quieter age. First of all advantage was taken of trains, and now of motor-cars, to increase

the restlessness, and to prevent time being allowed for reflection. "There are people of the highest rank in the England of to-day whose existence is as much nomadic as that of Red Indians in the reserved territories of North America. You cannot ascertain their whereabouts without consulting the most recent newspapers. Their life may be quite accurately described as a return, on a scale of unprecedented splendour and comfort, to the life of tribes in that stage of human development which is known as the period of the chase. They migrate from one hunting-ground to another as the diminution of the game impels them. Their residences, vast and substantial as they are, serve only as tents and wigwams. The existence of a monk in a cloister, of a prisoner in a fortress, is more favourable to the intellect than theirs." * This was written before the era of motor-cars, which have enormously extended the spirit of restlessness, and popularised mere locomotion as a serious occupation.

The aristocracy with their money are more at the mercy of the advances of mechanical civilisation than other people, and the effect of the change is, therefore, more noticeable in them. It is as if a smell of wood fires and fragrant violets had been overpowered by the fumes of petrol and the smoke of cigars. The change of manner is indicative of a change of disposition. The manners of a gentleman were a reflection

* P. G. Hamerton, "The Intellectual Life."

of the way the world regarded him. The world smiled upon him. He was conscious of this and was ready to smile back. Now that he can no longer expect immediate approbation and admiration, but has to be on his guard against criticism and attack, he ceases to smile. His winning cordiality is disappearing, and a sort of nervous defiance is taking its place.

Deprived of their power, and without occupation, the aristocracy—as we must still call them, though no more inaccurate name could possibly be found—have lost their distinction, and many of the moral attributes which fortified them in the upright discharge of their duty in the past have vanished. They must recognise that the adulation and flattery with which they are surrounded cannot be mistaken for true appreciation and commendation of their powers and talents. They seldom rise above the level of mediocrity. Physically, morally, and intellectually, they are a species in a steady decline, and there is every reason to believe that they are conscious of it. The truth is that the moment of full ripeness of these hothouse grapes has passed, and they have begun to shank and shrivel.

The society which these people form and regulate with their habits and customs we all seem to know, because of the snippets of information that catch our eye in every newspaper, or the details of high life of which we read while we sit in the dentist's waiting-room. It is the target for much ill-directed abuse and the subject

of much fictitious glorification. But a description of it in the psychological or sociological sense, though frequently attempted, has never been successfully done. Authors and playwrights catch glimpses into this inner circle, specially when they are taken up as the fashionable furore of the moment. But the best of them, even though they may be dazzled for a time by the glamour, never abide within the portals, otherwise they would cease to do decent work. The sketches and representations they give are, therefore, superficial, inaccurate, and lacking in real first-hand knowledge. On the other hand, those who live within the pale, partly from incompetence and partly from reluctance to betray their friends, are quite incapable of writing any *étude de mœurs* that would be worth having.

Roughly speaking, the so-called aristocracy consists of three sets or sections, not clearly defined at all, but for all that more or less distinct. Of course there are a number of non-descripts who may be difficult to classify. They hover around, and would be glad to be included somewhere.

Firstly: There are the strict, hidebound, ultra-reactionary, intensely class-conscious families who are old-fashioned, fearing lest the change of one habit might endanger their uncompromising hatred of everything modern, though they would accept modern improvements which add to their personal comfort. They are entirely out of touch with modern thought, and suspicious

of novelty in any shape. They are ignorant and intensely proud of their prejudices. They obey all conventions. They expect absolute subservience in those who work under them, and they can count hundreds who hold them in awe and reverence.

Secondly: There is the sporting set, some merely happy-go-lucky, some frankly dissolute, devoting their lives to hunting, racing, shooting, and other forms of sport; utterly uneducated, wildly extravagant, reckless, thoughtless, and vaguely apprehensive that certain movements are on foot which seem designed to deprive them of some of their fun. They are toadied and encouraged by a large band of followers, whom they love to patronise with easy familiarity. They are no believers in education for the masses. They find the "lower orders" with whom they associate, *i.e.*, jockeys, bookies, keepers, gillies, valets, and grooms, are in no way discontented with their lot. They are supposed to be a thoroughly British type, and they are immensely popular.

The third section, in some ways the most important, is more difficult to describe. They are the leaders who are in close touch with public life. The "smartest" functions in the social world are organised by them. They pride themselves on a high level of intelligence, and on knowledge of current affairs and of the most modern literature, music, and art. They patronise the leading men in every sphere, and even theorise about Social Reform. Professors,

littérateurs, and artists are enticed into their houses to meet there accomplished conversationalists, and left in the lurch when they have served their purpose. They may even attempt to cast their net wide enough to include a prominent Radical Minister, or even a Socialist. Anything sensational is valuable. Worldliness, superficial brilliance, and seemingly advanced ideas make them very prominent and much sought after. No one would dispute their social gifts or their attractive qualities. There is a dazzling aplomb about them which carries all before it. Critic and enemy alike, once within their orbit, come willingly under the spell. They are more responsible for the general tone and manners of society than the other two sections, because all the substrata in London and the provinces look to them for a lead. Section No. 1 regard them with disapproval, and they regard Section No. 1 with contempt.

There is no hard and fast line between the different sets, they intermingle and amalgamate, and in the face of danger they will combine and co-operate. A sense of property and pride in possessions unite them. They are linked together by a consciousness of being well-bred, superior, and benevolent, not to be confounded with the people. Theirs is a metal that is unalloyed and specially hall-marked. But society, from the King to the dustman, is graded in a vast number of sub-divided classes, sections, or cliques. They overlap and intermingle, but are conscious, nevertheless, of their distinctive differences.

A description of the aristocracy is incomplete without some reference to the very much larger class of would-be aristocrats, who with sufficient means can imitate to the life the type they admire. This set is very class-proud; they would hotly resent being confused in any way with the middle class, but they cannot boast of the pretence of noble blood or distinguished ancestry, though a peerage or two may come their way. To a stranger their lavish entertainments could not be distinguished from those of high society, but a true connoisseur would know that very few of the people disporting themselves in their ball-rooms or staying in their country houses would be found to frequent the holy of holies. They are more aristocratic than the aristocrats, they are "high born," without being "well-bred." They pose to their social inferiors as the real thing. They have no trace of distinction of any sort. In the social sense only are they gentlemen. They have climbed, and are climbing still. As a Japanese observer remarks, they are "more like some rough wood covered with varnish than some well-planed and polished wood. Varnished wood often looks smoother than any self-polished wood. But the latter is much safer. Indeed, I have seen so often that the varnish was cracked and some ugly grain appeared from inside." Their hatred of democracy is intolerant and bitter. They never feel quite secure in their position. This makes them inconsiderate and ill-mannered with

subordinates, and ready to discard any who cease to be useful to them in their social ambitions. They fear to make friends with unconventional people lest they should lose caste with their own set. The gentleman's capacity of being able to make friends with anybody is beyond their reach. They are snobs, but without the *naïveté* of those Thackeray described, and with a good deal more pretension. One day a more dominant position might be theirs under the shadowing wing of an unmixed plutocracy. It is true enough that in herds men behave very differently from the way they would as individuals. But it is with the impulses of the herd that we have to deal.

It may hardly seem credible that any of the sections of society here described signify, or that it matters in the least what particular form their frivolity takes. There is something almost nauseating in the exceeding comfort, the cloying surfeit, the callous contentment, the stagnant indolence, the self-satisfied sleekness of the thoughtless well-to-do. When one thinks of the great national concerns, the problems of the wage-earners, the great life of the millions who are struggling, fighting, working, and all the while contributing; when one considers the achievements of the creative arts, the mysteries of science, the ceaseless vigilance of the human mind inquiring and searching for better things, the whole throbbing pulse of active human life: and then turns to these little lordlings and their satellites, their admirers, and their mimics

selfishly isolated in busy idleness, surrounded by their ideals of fashion and vanity, it is like turning from a volume of Shakespeare to read *Comic Cuts*.

But unfortunately they do count because of their economic and their social position, and the lingering traces of their political power. Their social value, however, does not depend on how much they create and produce, but on how little they waste. The waste is great, and therefore their social value is no doubt low. However they may act, and whatever they may do, the superstitious belief in them remains profound. Incredible nonsense is talked about them by those —and there are many still—who pin their faith on the ascendancy of an aristocracy nationally as well as socially. These supporters of theirs contend that there is an essential difference of caste, a real inherent superiority and a refinement which only surroundings such as theirs can produce. And they will declare that the attacks against them are only caused by the jealousy and envy of the discontents, who are painfully conscious of their own inferiority and incapacity to transform themselves from sparrows into peacocks. There can be little hope of clearing away the thick jungle of snobbishness when real appreciation of pomp and circumstance, quasi-religious reverence for rank and titles, and heartfelt yearnings for smart fashions and riches grow thick and wild. This is the case in a very large section of the community to

whom such things have become attractive, partly because they are strange and out of reach and partly because they appeal to uneducated minds.

Let us take the chief elements on which an aristocracy can rely. There are three—money, birth, and merit. With regard to money the present writer does not desire to go over ground that he has already attempted partially to cover elsewhere.* It is enough to say that an aristocracy cannot recover its power by turning itself into a plutocracy. In so far as they accept the possession of riches as a sufficient passport for the admission of any one to their select society, they are doing a bad service to society in the larger sense of the word. In so far as they encourage reckless extravagance, and place their seal of approval on senseless luxury and on an absurdly high standard of living, they are vulgarising social life and betraying their trust as guardians of manners, habits and customs, which thousands of others attempt to imitate. And so far as they expect to gain power by increased wealth, they are deluding themselves in supposing that the increased responsibility which riches give them is one that they are capable of discharging honourably, adequately, or with advantage. They will be ousted and exploited by those with whom they are making an alliance, the hard-headed genuine plutocrat, who is not hampered by any of the squeamishness and refinements which

* "The Camel and the Needle's Eye."

some of the more old-fashioned gentlemen may still retain. The gain they hope for is fictitious and delusive ; nothing will contribute more surely to their absolute downfall than partnership with the most destructive, unscrupulous, and cruel force that exists in the world at the present time. This obsession with regard to riches shows up as well as anything their defective education.

As a class they are considerably richer than the corresponding class in any other country. Their power is still great because it is territorial as well as social. Taking the nobility alone, they hold between them over 15½ million acres of the land of the United Kingdom, with an annual rent-roll of £13,000,000, or £23,000 each on the average.* It has been computed that not one-tenth of the estates have been acquired for value received. All the rest in one way or another has been obtained for nothing. With the land the finest palaces and castles throughout the country also belong to them.

Would it not be a calamity, it is often asked, if these splendid old houses, with their great traditions, their priceless art treasures and their impressive and dignified households, were swept away and the properties broken up? The reply is that nothing can be swept away at a moment's notice. But the most beautiful, the most dignified, and the most impressive abode of the worthiest of our "governing families" must be

* "Financial Reform Almanack."

regarded now actually as a form of national trust, though legally it may be called personal property. Its merit rests entirely on sensuous enjoyment, and among the more enlightened minds of the day there is a natural misgiving as to whether this princely and lavish method of living can be afforded in a community in which the evils and sufferings of poverty are so severe and so pressing. On the part of "the trustees" themselves, who cannot as in the past plead ignorance of how their fellow-men live, there may conceivably be engendered a growing reluctance to take full advantages of the rights which the narrow laws of property allow in defiance of the dictates of the larger precepts of justice and equity. There are greater rights than the rights of property—the right of the nation to support itself, and the right of the people to live. Increasing land hunger and the cry of the landless multitude may also make them begin to doubt whether they are wholly justified in remaining sole administrators of these vast territories, many acres of which are given up to sport,* and whether in fact they are not mainly responsible for driving people into the fetid slums of overcrowded cities. As landowners they must expect in the near future to come in more and more for

* In the six crofting counties of Scotland alone, in the twenty-five years from 1883 to 1908, deer forest lands increased by 1,248,598 acres, while in the non-crofting counties the land exclusively devoted to sport in 1908 amounted to 563,688 acres ("Our Scots Noble Families," Thomas Johnston).

direct attack from the growing force of public opinion, which believes that the land of Britain should be made "less of a pleasure-ground for the rich and more of a treasure-house for the nation." As matters stand it is clear that money and property are the strongest buttresses of the aristocracy. They even try to organise forces ostensibly "for the maintenance of Law and Order" but actually for the defence of their power, their property, and their possessions.* This movement, if it spreads, will amount on their part to a declaration of class war.

As for birth, it is in itself a very uncertain and weak foundation on which to base a demand for special privileges. Moreover, there is an astonishing amount of fable and myth connected with the subject. Even heraldry has now become scientific, and the critical spirit is assailing with effective ridicule some of the products of pedigree-mongers of the past. The fiction of noble blood is exploded. Even in the cases where long genealogy of a more or less authentic nature can be traced are there any notable and admirable results from the point of view of breed? If generations of leisured gentlemen continually marry their relations, who, like them, have no outstanding physical or mental qualifications, the outcome must be a degenerate type. If the stock is constantly refreshed by the admission of outside

* See the regulations of the "Civilian Force." President: the Duke of Abercorn.

elements, that is to say, marriage with people who belong to what is considered a lower social stratum, the noble blood is contaminated, though the breed is perhaps saved from deterioration. Historically speaking, the British peer is not, like the continental noble, the member of a caste. The privileges that he holds are due to his office rather than to his blood. But he has formed himself and his relations into a caste, and boasts, when it is not too palpably absurd, of his noble blood. In the direct line his mother may be the daughter of an American tradesman, and both his grandmothers and one of his grandfathers may be people of low and humble origin, but he inherits the name and can talk freely of "old family," "good birth," and "noble blood." A similar descent traced through the female line may place a man entirely outside the aristocratic preserve, and his claim to "noble descent" will not be listened to. The whole doctrine is quite arbitrary, and will not bear examination for a moment. No gentleman need be a whit the worse for being descended from the illegitimate offspring of a king, from a tradesman, or from an actress, as many are, only do not let him foolishly pride himself on the superiority of his stock and boast of the purity of an ancient lineage.

Does noble descent, of no matter how many generations, produce refinement—physical or moral? It would be absurd to declare positively that it does, because any one with half a

moment's thought could mention flagrant instances to the contrary. Nor does humble origin invariably produce a coarse type. High refinement, not only of feature and limb, but of disposition and character, can be found in the meanest home; and as for the length of genealogy, many a farmer and countryman to-day, were he rich and foolish enough, could trace his descent back in parish registers for hundreds of years. Our long-established system of primogeniture has had the effect of constantly returning a large number of the children of the aristocracy back to the ranks of the middle and the lower classes, with the result that there is more so-called "gentle blood" in the middle classes than there is in the "upper ten thousand." As the flowing waters of a river are continually making deposits, and yet also erosions, so an aristocracy is always dropping and picking up links, and any one would make a great mistake if he were to commend or condemn a man for the purity or lowness of his birth.

At the same time it is reasonable enough to contend that an environment which gives, generation after generation, healthy conditions, fresh air and good food must in a great measure invigorate the physique of a class, although to counterbalance that a process of inbreeding may often produce highly strung nervous natures. In human beings, as in animals, there is undoubtedly such a thing as an underbred look and a look of high breeding. The former is generally notice-

able when an individual calls attention to himself by the extreme pretentiousness of his appearance. The look of high breeding can be, and sometimes is, combined with intellectual inanity.

The belief in the fiction of noble blood, otherwise called pride of race, is by no means uncommon. There are many who cordially agree with Mr. Waterbrook in "David Copperfield": "Other things are all very well in their way, but give me Blood." "A man of ancient and honourable descent" wrote not long ago to the public press: "Men of gentle birth entitled to wear swords have ever deemed that the profession of arms was their natural calling, as the rolls of honour of England, Scotland, and Ireland amply testify from long before the days of Drake and Howard to those of Nelson and Wellesley down to the present day. The foundations of the British Empire have been well cemented with the blood of scions of ancient and honourable families who died for God, king, and country while leading the way to victory. Neither journals nor magazines then existed for the most part to advertise their achievements, and latter-day critics can form no idea of the feelings of chivalry which have ever caused men of good blood to be silent as to their own deeds, and ever to stand aside and allow others to reap the fame and rewards that they themselves have won on many a hard-fought field of battle by sea and land."

A very competent critic replied to this.* With regard to the silence of "men of good blood" as to their own deeds, he speaks of the Middle Ages as specially "a braggart age," and adds: "More than one Elizabethan hero wrote his own tale for fear that aught of his fame should be lost, and the practice shows no sign of being abandoned by our great commanders." To the argument that "the hard-fought battle by sea and land" was won as a general rule by "men of good blood," he replies: "These, it would seem, are accompanied to the field by certain plebeians to whom the fame and reward incident upon the victory are silently handed by the victors. If this be so, the shy patricians must have suffered a long vexation from the writings of the chroniclers and historians who, disregarding the delicate feelings of chivalry, have from the beginning of time given all honour, fame, and applause to the well-born combatant." The ancient and honourable descent, the "good blood" of Drake or Nelson, this critic declares, might be questioned by any genealogist. In conclusion he adds: "To sum up, let us say that England had never a noble and gentle caste unless it were in the yellow-plush days of the early nineteenth century. It is the business of the antiquary and genealogist to show that England has an ancestor in a frieze coat as well as an ancestor in cloth of gold, and enough reason to be proud of both."

* "What is Believed," *The Ancestor*, April, 1904.

A glance at a list of our generals and admirals to-day will show that "noble blood" is not very much to the fore. But in time of war an immense amount of *rêclame* is given to any titled personages who go to the front, and, with the same curious disregard for the hundreds and thousands of plebeians who accompany them, they are invariably quoted as instances of the peculiar heroism of our aristocracy.

The peerage, which is by way of being the reservoir of noble blood, contains only thirty-seven members who are descendants of peerages founded before the seventeenth century. A large number have been recruited during the last fifty years from the middle class. While this may help to fortify the physical stamina of the upper class, it does not prevent incompetence in the younger generation. Because the middle-class peer makes a point of having his children brought up in the orthodox public-school fashion, and after a generation or two the boast of noble blood will be made and habits of idleness and indolence will be fully developed. All the grit and force of character, which made the first peer successful, will have disappeared.

It is ridiculous to go on pretending that long ages of special advantages and power have given our "ancient aristocracy" a peculiar sense of responsibility and a wonderful high tone of perfect breeding.

That generations of leisured high living and luxurious idleness leave their traces is unques-

tionably true. It may engender almost invincible sluggishness of disposition and mental inertia, and even destroy will-power and capabilities. But this is another consequence of environment and confirmed habit, not of blood. The tricks of heredity, the intricate and untraceable interlacing of human relationships, even in a society that may be divided up into hard and fast lines of classes, make any generalisations founded on the argument of birth utterly unsound. The two curious but simple facts that every man must have one thousand and twenty-four direct ancestors only ten generations ago, and that a man ten generations ago can easily be the progenitor of ten times that number of descendants in the present generation, may make us hesitate to dogmatise about noble blood and the inheritance of special qualities. If, indeed, it could be demonstrated that only men whose names appear in the peerages had the moral characteristics of a gentleman in the highest sense, or even if it could be proved that all whose names do appear in the peerage possessed these particular characteristics, there might be some foundation for an argument. But neither of these assertions is in the least true.

"How dark lies honour hid! and what turmoil
In all things human: sons of mighty men
Fallen to naught and from ill seed again
Good fruit: yea famine in the rich man's scroll
Writ deep, and in poor flesh a lordly soul." *

* Euripides, "Electra," Gilbert Murray's translation.

So much for property and birth. As Disraeli said in one of his books, "Greatness no longer depends on rentals, the world is too rich; nor on pedigrees, the world is too knowing."

This brings us to merit, the only sound basis upon which anything can be claimed, and the possession of which would in itself prevent any man from seeking undue privileges or advantages which can only be gained at other people's expense. Were money and birth the sole considerations to be taken into account in examining the position of the aristocracy of to-day, no wise man would hesitate to advocate the annihilation of the whole class.

While admitting that there are many men not of the aristocracy by any extended meaning of the term who are gentlemen, and many members of the aristocracy who are not gentlemen, we are prepared further to make the admission that in the moral attributes and qualifications that go to make up the gentleman in the highest sense —we now leave behind the class sense—there is something definite, recognisable, and worth preserving.

"'What is your parentage?'
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit
Do give thee fivefold blazon." *

To attempt a definition is perhaps a presumption, considering the numerous books that have

* Shakespeare, "Twelfth Night."

been written on the subject in the past. Some idea of the extent to which the subject has occupied the attention of writers in all ages can be gathered from an interesting collection of extracts which has lately been put together, and which in itself forms a large volume.* Taine, in his notes on England, said: "I endeavour rightly to comprehend the epithet so essential—'a gentleman.' It constantly recurs, and comprises a mass of ideas wholly English. In France we have not the word because we have not the same thing, and these three syllables, as used across the Channel, summarise the history of English society." An exact parallel does not exist indeed in continental countries.

Even the oldest writers recognise that money, birth, and title were not essentials for a gentleman. It is a positive relief to find something which cannot be estimated on the money basis. Money can win a place in Parliament, a peerage, a position in Society, and academic distinctions, but it cannot make a man a gentleman. James I. is supposed to have remarked to a lady petitioning him to make her son a gentleman, "I could make him a nobleman, but God Almighty could not make him a gentleman." It depends on character, temperament, and moral outlook, and has nothing to do with etiquette, deportment, and ceremonious behaviour, about which, it seems, numberless booklets continue to appear. Nor has it any con-

* Smythe Palmer, "The Complete Gentleman."

nection with "gentility," which is a very remote imitation based on punctilious demeanour and propriety of speech. The courtesy of manner which is counted for so much might be taken to be the outward and graceful expression of the inward possession of certain qualities. But this is not invariably the case. Hazlitt, speaking of a gentleman's manners, says: "Manners, properly speaking, regulate our words and actions in the routine of personal intercourse. They have little to do with real kindness of intention, or practical services, or disinterested sacrifices; but they put on the garb and mock the appearance of these in order to prevent a breach of the peace and to smooth and varnish over the discordant materials when any number of individuals are brought in contact together. The conventional compact of good manners does not reach beyond the moment and the company." *

Every one knows the studied, polished manner which vanishes in moments of temper, or when no one who matters is looking on. It is common enough, and is often mistaken for the genuine article. We know, too, the "puffect gen'leman" or the man who tips highest. But we want to get away from all the ugly growths that have either been derived from, or are disfigurements of, the idea of the gentleman, and try and estimate the true notion at its highest value, as an ideal towards which an aristocracy might more successfully aspire.

* W. Hazlitt, "On the Look of a Gentleman."

The essentials would seem to be: Special consideration for others—quite genuine, without the slightest trace of patronage; a sense of honour and fitness, instinctive rather than reasoned, which has been impressed from the earliest times by the influence of environment, but has never been learnt; refinement in the best sense, not a foolish sensitiveness on which anything rough or violent easily jars, but a well-tuned nature to which low-minded coarseness is naturally abhorrent; and finally, a well-adjusted balance of two qualities that are difficult to combine—self-confidence and humility. But all these virtues must be natural; the moment self-consciousness or affectation steps in the whole idea is vitiated. Courage must not be omitted, both physical and moral. To give him his due, both in time of ascendancy and in the darkest hours of defeat, a fearless courage has been one of the most attractive qualities of a true gentleman, and through this more than through anything else has he gained respect and admiration. The aristocrat has a real advantage in the fact that he need not be uneasy about his position in the world. He should be able to stand success with the same equanimity as he does adversity. "Prosperity does not search a gentleman's temper more than his adverse of fortune."

An anecdote * of a trivial incident may be repeated here, as it is an excellent illustration

* Quoted in Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft's "Reminiscences."

of how the considerate tact of a gentleman may make him an object of respect and affection to others :—

A young private soldier had been promoted from the ranks and given a commission in another regiment. According to custom, he was invited to a farewell dinner by the officers of his old regiment, and, as guest of the evening, he was placed on the right of the presiding Colonel and helped to all the dishes first. He was naturally little used to the ways of the polite world and the *agréments* of the dining-table, but the Colonel did his best to put his guest at ease. The soup having been served, a servant came to the guest's side holding a large bowl which contained simply lumps of ice for cooling the champagne. The new-made officer did not know what to make of this bowl. "Ice, sir?" asked the servant. The Colonel chatted merrily to him on his left. Others of the party began to perceive the dilemma. "Ice, sir?" again asked the waiter. The guest, in ignorant desperation, took up a piece of the ice and, not knowing what to do with it, put it in his soup! Some of the younger officers smiled. But when the bowl was offered to the Colonel, who went on chatting with his guest without moving a muscle of his face, he also dropped a piece of ice into his soup. Those who came afterwards took their cue from the Colonel or let the bowl pass; and the novice breathed freely again to think that after all he had done the right thing.

Although the qualities of a gentleman are qualities that are well worth preserving, it would be a mistake to over-estimate their value, or to suppose that they suffice for a man's equipment without further additions. They may even come to be altogether obscured by the damaging effects of a modern gentleman's environment and education. They are only a foundation on which can be built up talents, accomplishments, and the higher virtues, or, rather, they are the colouring element which may give beauty to what is otherwise dull and unattractive. They will help to imbue the whole with a tone which will increase a man's influence and make his talents all the more serviceable. But if he is to be an idler, a squanderer of the nation's wealth, or a self-indulgent trifler, it would be far better if he were not a gentleman, because then his influence would not be nearly so great.

It is the fading away of their finest gentleman-like qualities, the increase of the desire for moneyed ease, the excessive height of the standard of living, and the extremely low level of mental and moral refinement that makes the aristocracy of to-day, who, like their predecessors, cling to a belief in their own superiority, a fit subject for closer investigation and scrutiny. It would be untrue to say that the aristocracy have fallen from a position of power entirely through their own shortcomings and delinquencies. They served not unworthily during the period they were called upon to take control. But they have

gradually had to reckon with new forces, and their first instinct—as, indeed, would be the case with any body who saw their supremacy threatened—was to counteract and attempt to defeat the rise of the rival force, instead of preparing to accommodate themselves to its inevitable triumph. They continue, therefore, to dispute the claims of democracy and to prophesy its failure. But their opposition is rendered singularly ineffective owing to their own lack of outfit, and the entire absence of agreement among them on a concerted, constructive, and alternative policy. Their ignorance is the main cause of their prejudiced and reactionary views.

No one would be so foolish as to suppose that any class of society can be transformed in character by condemnation and abuse. Altered circumstances, economic and political evolution, will gradually effect changes in due time. Every animal must adapt itself to its environment. But it can reasonably be expected that a better chance should be given to the coming generation of aristocrats by more attention being devoted to their training and education. The aristocrat may have advantages, but he is not allowed to use them to any good purpose. He may have unlimited choice of methods and means in theory, but in practice his choice always falls on what is prescribed for him. As he is willing to pay, it might be supposed that special opportunities should be afforded him to reach a high state of proficiency and pre-

eminence. But instead of this his class is universally admitted to be growing, intellectually and economically, the most negligible class in the community. He submits to the second-rate because he does not appreciate the first-rate. And there is no section of opinion in the aristocracy which desires to exert itself to effect a radical change. An isolated individual voice here and there avails nothing; it can easily be drowned.

Still, it would be unfair to blame him solely for short-sightedness, when we rest content with a system of education which gives him distorting spectacles with which to view the world, spectacles that almost make him blind. In the direction of education, and in this direction alone, can any useful and practical suggestions be made with a view to strengthening the faculties, enlightening the mind, and training the powers of reasoning and moral perception of the generations that are to come.

It is, therefore, the question of the early training of the aristocratic and rich leisured class that must now be considered in full.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INFLUENCE OF HOME

Importance of education—Its objects—Desire of parents to shirk responsibility—The nurse—The children's surroundings—The boys' holidays—The influence of a home—The parents' duties—First knowledge of sexual problem—A child's powers of expression—The child's imagination and reasoning faculty—Personal initiative—Necessity for attention and sympathy.

The work of awakening and directing the latent sensibilities of a child is one of unspeakable delicacy and difficulty. If this were generally apprehended, the task would be undertaken with a greater sense of responsibility and far more studied thought. In time, perhaps, when they are better understood, parental duties will be more justly valued, and the status and qualifications of schoolmasters and mistresses will be raised to a very much higher level than they are now. Although so much attention is being devoted to education in many quarters, it is regarded in the upper class as a very ordinary process, which works of itself and is regulated by accepted conventional precepts. When it succeeds it is the system that is responsible; when it fails it is the individual child that is to blame.

The reader must be reminded that it is impossible to speak of any one branch of education without touching points that affect education in general, and although some of the strictures which will be made may be equally relevant to the education of other classes, we are here dealing with one particular class alone.

Let no parent be under the delusion that the established system for the training of gentlemen is satisfactory, and that so long as they obey certain accepted rules and fashions with regard to the home life of children, and duly select the most popular schools for them to go to at a certain age, they have discharged their duties to the best of their ability. It is a much more intricate business than that. No rules or regulations, however fashionable or generally accepted, are necessarily applicable or suitable in any one particular case. As for the schools, they must be dealt with separately.

The true object in the education and training of children would seem to be twofold. First, the careful development of their individual characters by the proper cultivation of their faculties and talents ; and secondly, their training and adaptation for the service of citizenship. These should never be lost sight of.

Though strides in advance have been made we are still very far from having reached any satisfactory system of education. The sum total of human knowledge has greatly increased, and this country does not lag behind either in its con-

tribution to the common store or in its utilisation of the advantages of knowledge. But in the elementary and secondary education of the children of the rich there is a very conspicuous lack of progress and a very deleterious conservatism.

The ostensible object in the education of a gentleman to-day seems to be to prepare him to pass the necessary examinations for certain specified professions, and in those cases where no profession is in view to let him pass through the recognised course which is considered fitting for one who is to hold a position of leisured prominence. The early training of the boy, in fact, has only one object, which is to prepare him for his school. The girl's case till quite lately was in some ways a more flagrant and hopeless story of neglect. She was hardly grounded in the elements of any branch of learning, for no thought was taken or preparation made for any future occupation. An eighth part was spent on her of what was devoted to the boy's schooling. It was only necessary to give her a superficial burnish which would make her a brilliant and attractive commodity in the marriage market. This is the object still. But girls' schools recently established and unhampered by stale traditions are now more in vogue. A certain sort of education is provided for girls which places them sometimes on a higher intellectual level than their brothers.

A number of parents practically wash their

hands of the whole process. We have seen how in past centuries this was an aristocratic characteristic. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was neglect combined with hardships. Children were left to associate with servants, whose coarse habits they copied. Now it is neglect mixed with pampering, expensive toys, seaside trips, large nurseries, schoolroom footmen, which are all as so much poison without the one thing that matters—a mother's companionship. The care of small children is considered tiresome, uninteresting, and troublesome. Parents find it exacting and perplexing; it impedes the performance of the normal round of pleasures and amusements. Child-bearing itself is nuisance enough, but if after that they are to exercise unceasing vigilance and forethought, to make perpetual decisions, give advice, judge when and how to interfere, and, more important still, when not to interfere—in fact, devote their lives to such a humdrum and dowdy occupation, it would be absolutely intolerable.

Get a competent nurse, see as little as you can of the children in the early crying days; engage a good governess and tuck them all away in a wing of the large house, out of sight and out of hearing, with their own retinue of servants. In the evening let them troop into the drawing-room with their bright sashes, white frocks, little sailor suits, miniature kilts, and frizzed hair. "What darlings! A kiss all round and now run along." Discuss their characters with your

friends, having ascertained what their characters are from an occasional ten minutes' talk with the governess. Find out the name of the best private school—the best will probably be the one where you pay most—and for a Public School, of course the one to which your husband went, and there you are. Simple enough and very little trouble—till afterwards.

This may not be quite the ordinary course, but let no one suppose that it is not very common, especially where money abounds. Speaking more generally, there is undoubtedly a widespread tendency to avoid responsibility, or to misuse or renounce the particular authority which parents alone can wield. Even the advanced new woman affects to despise domestic duties. She has persuaded herself that scholastic and professional attainments are superior. Man having legally a position of superiority, she concludes, therefore, that his occupations must be in themselves superior. Domestic duties in reality, and more especially the early care and training of children, though far less showy and recompensed by no credit and public renown, are a most vital concern in the organic life of the community, and are essentially remunerative in the long run. Moreover, it is an infinitely more difficult task to perform efficiently, hence no doubt the tendency to shirk it.

The servant to whose care the child is entrusted has a serious responsibility thrust upon her. A nurse who commands high wages is supposed

infallibly to be a good nurse. But her work, unlike that of other servants, is not mechanical. She has not to deal with food and furniture, but with human beings. Her high wages may only mean that she has had experience of large households. No price can indicate the extent of her understanding of or sympathy with children. Such knowledge and sympathy are not to be measured by any sum of money. They are inborn human qualities which a quite inexperienced nursery maid can possess. A nurse, therefore, who gets £60 a year or more need be no real acquisition so far as the early training of the child is concerned. But often the payment of good wages satisfies the parents that they have done the best they can for their children. In many houses education is certainly not the highest expense. The cook is frequently paid at a higher rate than the governess. It is common for a governess to receive £30 to £60 a year and less, and it is also quite common for a cook's wages to be from £60 to £100 a year and more.

In addition to neglect by parents, it may be the children are made playthings and spoiled, it may be that meaningless discipline is enforced simply for discipline's sake, or it may be that the powers of direction are handed to strangers, who, however well-meaning they are, have not the perception into a child's nature which those in the position of parents alone can possess.

Parental instinct constitutes almost a sense apart. Certain parents who, generally speak-

ing, may be undiscriminating and erratic in their outward relations, may at the same time be capable of showing the keenest and truest insight in understanding the temperamental idiosyncrasies of their own children. Their relationship carries with it a subtle faculty of moral discrimination.

As for mental training, the object appears to be far more that children should be taught than that children should learn. The governess's formula is that there are a number of definitions, dates, names, and phrases that must be "committed to memory." The child knows that some one will be cross if he does not remember something. Not the love of knowledge, but the fear of forgetting, becomes the chief incentive to learning. It would be interesting if it could be ascertained how often when children are declared naughty and difficult to teach it is really the method adopted with them that is at fault. The approved method of teaching is by no means necessarily the particular way in which a particular child will learn. Rich parents are tempted to use their money to withdraw their children more and more from their own supervision. The upbringing of small children is one of the first worries of which they desire to be relieved. Naturally enough, because the worry is considerable, the difficulty real, and the problem one which seems to have no clear solution.

In addition to the mental preparation, for

which the standard is set by the schools and for the defects in which therefore parents cannot be held responsible, there are many special drawbacks connected with the rearing of children in the upper classes. Their surroundings are such as to make them become accustomed at a very early age to the immediate satisfaction of all their requirements, to a very high standard of physical comfort, and to the acceptance, as their natural due, of service and attendance. What may be called a project of life does not exist for them. They cannot be told that all they will have when they grow up is what they themselves earn. They are either to have no profession at all, or else they are told, "You *must* do *something*," and they take up a profession either for a short time or in an amateur spirit. Even the management of estates is delegated to stewards and agents, so that nothing shall interfere with their opportunities for pleasure, amusement, and enjoyment. They have, in fact, imposed upon them enforced leisure, which is the most difficult and even insoluble problem which any man, rich or poor, clever or stupid, weak or strong, is ever asked to face. Lastly, they begin to imbibe the poison of class prejudice. This is unavoidable in such an atmosphere. The superiority of the gentleman and the inferiority of the rest of mankind, which is personified to them by the servants and retainers who entirely accept the view, is to them as fundamental a fact as any law of nature. Those children whose playground is the doorstep

and the gutter are simply another breed of animal, inferior by some unquestionable decree of providence. Do not their rags and dirt declare it? It is not the difference between the two, which may be patent enough, but the supériority of the one over the other, which becomes an article of faith, and this form of prejudice spreads also to the poorer gentlemen's families, and in rich non-aristocratic families it is not tacitly and instinctively taken for granted, but it is loudly and incessantly proclaimed. Such a habit of mind becomes ingrained. In after years it can be dissimulated, but never quite eradicated. It might and could be corrected or mitigated by school life, but this, as we shall see later, is far from the case.

The exhausting efforts made for the entertainment of boys during their holidays is another feature of these homes. When the schoolboy age is reached the sons become the objects of much interest and trouble and of a good deal of unnecessary fuss. The organisation of the holiday time is a wearing task, undertaken often most conscientiously by parents, and it is the school system which imposes it upon them. There must be house parties, cricket matches, shooting lessons with the gamekeeper, and the purchase of horses for hunting. The boys must not get bored; there must be plenty of fun. Nevertheless, they yawn as they look from the window on a rainy day because they have nothing to fall back upon; no time has been allowed for

the cultivation of any of their inward resources. And what is all this for? It is to produce the recognised type of English gentleman, which is gradually, under modern conditions, proving itself to be the most useless and by no means the most ornamental.

The period before going to school and the intervals at home during school years are without question the most important and fruitful. The earliest impressions are the most lasting. The first beginnings either encourage or repel the desire for further exploration. But apart from incidents and instruction, the child's mind is extraordinarily susceptible to tone and atmosphere, and one of its first inclinations is to be imitative. Its intuitions are mysterious and incomprehensible. It is always absorbing, and in every home the successive impressions, whether of concrete or abstract experiences, present themselves wrapped in a particular aroma, which is the outcome of no conscious influence, but a subtle extract produced by the combined influences of everything, both personal and material, that goes to make up that home. The parents, the children, the servants, the friends, the house, and the country or the town all contribute not only by their own qualities but by their relationship to one another. Whether the prevailing tone is one of harmony or discord, beauty or ugliness, pleasure or pain, it is going to act as the prime influence in the boy's life.

If the school is a boarding-school, it is doubt-

ful whether the child should make the break from his home very early. Children do not learn more because they begin sooner. The likelihood is that a boy under ten years of age is not sufficiently formed to withstand the influences, not always desirable, of the herd. He can hardly yet assert himself, as he is totally without experience, and his coming out very early alone into the world is likely to prove more harmful to him than beneficial.

Parents in isolated groups may not be able to control or alter the system on which our schools are run. But in the home they have complete control to strike out their own line. All parents soon find out that their children are not going to be moulded just as they wish. They come up against surprises, perhaps even shocks. The growth of the flower is a mystery because it is a flower that has never in all the world's history grown before. It seems to be like one and then like another, with the characteristics of a third and fourth, and then something quite its own. Neither physically, mentally, nor morally can one hair's-breadth be added to its stature, but its blooms can be blighted and the buds of originality nipped. It is the soil, the temperature, and the atmosphere in which it grows that can be tended and supervised. And there will be something in the flower that will bear the imprint of that attention or neglect until the day it fades and dies.

So important is the home influence that if it

is good a boy can be saved from snares and guarded from dangers in the future, and can survive without loss of character and individuality the course of education which he is destined to undergo. If it is bad, or non-existent—that is to say, if he feels drawn by no ties of sentiment, no recollections of pleasure, no bond of affection to his home, or to his parents, or those who stand in the place of parents to him—if those ties are no deeper than the perfunctory acceptance of filial duties, then he will become at best a machine-made type.

It is very little use for parents to arm themselves with preconceived notions and theories of education. It is equivalent to purchasing tools before knowing what kind of material is to be worked. The same tools are not suitable for wax that would do for wood, or for stone that would do for iron. The wax is not going to be converted into stone, nor the iron into wood. But by treatment and manipulation some powers of resistance can be put even into wax and some pliancy can be given even to iron. Will-power can be strengthened, stubbornness softened, impetuosity tempered, and sloth repressed. But the underlying motive power is the individual temperament, which must never be slighted or ignored. It is more a question of guiding an energy than of moulding a material. Careful observation and constant supervision are indispensable. "We may lose sight of the *child* in our hunt for the *method*," says Miss Finlay

Johnson in a book in which she tells the story of a striking experiment by which she revolutionised the life of her school.* When she first came to the school "so little was there of initiative and originality on the part of the children themselves that I felt sure nothing short of a surgical operation, a complete cutting away of old habits and the formation of a new school tradition, would meet the case." It is this sort of bold spirit that is wanted in the education of the children, be they from the cottage or the country house.

If parents could by any means make their children grow up as they wished, the task would be arduous, but comparatively simple: they could be supplied with a fixed code and a cut-and-dried scheme to follow. But as the most normal child is full of the unexpected and the unforeseen, their task, though not as arduous, is more subtle and more delicate. It requires primarily what many parents are prepared to give—that is, personal solicitude and loving attention. No one can point to unqualified success, because perfection and complete satisfaction in this, as in everything else, is unattainable. But many have quite unnecessarily to put up with bad failure. They may be unaware of it, or if aware of it they may not know with whom the blame rests. All parents cannot be expected to be strikingly original and to display

* "The Dramatic Method of Teaching," Harriet Finlay Johnson.

such perspicacity as to initiate by themselves an accurately adjusted scheme of education. But they can be supposed to understand their own offspring sufficiently well to control methods and exert influence with a view to securing, at least, unrestricted freedom of growth.

There is one distinct duty which is almost invariably neglected. Its neglect matters more in this class than in any other, because leisure and money represented as glorious advantages are going to become deadly enemies, holding out insinuating allurements which are wellnigh irresistible. Parents still refuse as a general rule, whether out of shyness, false delicacy, prudishness, laziness, or stupidity, to inform their children of fundamental biological truths. From the hygienic and rational point of view even more than from the moral point of view boys would be saved from many dilemmas and dangers if some of the laws of nature were explained to them and they were taught the elements of physiology. After all, the subject of sexual relations is not an abstract thesis of philosophy, nor an abstruse science of obscure and outside interest, but a great reality which vitally concerns the sentiments, passions, morals, health, and happiness of every boy born into the world. Yet, unfortunately, more often than not its discussion is scrupulously avoided between parents and children. It remains unexplained, and boys are left to gather from whisperings, jokes, and foolish, promiscuous, childish gossip among

themselves their first knowledge of the greatest of all mysteries, their first lesson of the rôle which as adult human beings they will all have to play in life, and their first inkling of the most perplexing of all the problems which are to confront them when they grow up. It may be admitted that it is not easy to impart the information broadly and naturally without rousing unhealthy curiosity, and without putting a boy into an uncomfortable state of apprehension and suspicion. A certain amount of embarrassment will perhaps be shown, because imparting such advice is not regarded as an acknowledged parental duty. But it cannot be urged too strongly that one sentence from a father or mother on this subject is worth a series of sermons or lectures from schoolmasters. The more sensible schoolmasters would themselves welcome such a course, and would waste no regrets over the disappearance of the so-called innocence of the boys brought under their charge, which, after all, is only foolish ignorance.

The Public School age is the moment when the senses and perceptions are maturing, when new experiences are ripening, and the boy may easily fall a prey to bad habits and lax views, without a note of warning being given him. The fatal exposure comes. The more careless, the more honest, the more ingenuous are those who are discovered, the slyer, the more secretive and underhand easily escape detection. But, "in order to make an example," the boy is sent away from the school

disgraced. The full and entire burden of blame is cruelly thrust upon him. It is pretended that he ought to have known better by instinct. This means that he ought to have known by instinct how to regulate and restrain, to him, quite incomprehensible sensual impulses. He ought to have succeeded where grown men with experience, warning, and knowledge fail. Many a boy's career has been blighted by this treatment.

Not having received in their boyhood any explanation or advice on sexual questions, young men can hardly be blamed for treating the whole matter lightly. The worst consequence is not so much their accepting the existence of the prostitute class as a providential arrangement for the satisfaction of male appetites, but their cruel insistence on the sternest and most relentless social rule by which these unfortunates shall remain for ever degraded, while they themselves pretend to bear no defilement from their contact with what they are pleased to condemn as pitch.

Far too much is made of allowing boys to, what is called, "buy their own experience." Human beings are occupied in doing this almost every day of their lives. Where traps and pitfalls can be avoided, parents may at least give a warning, not so much to impress on the children the hurt they may do to themselves, but to point out cause and effect, and how by their actions others may be injured.

When we come to examine the Public School system rich parents cannot be relieved of all

blame. It is true that they have no control over the actual curriculum of learning, but they often insist on a degree of physical comfort which will not be too severe a contrast to the home life to which their children are accustomed. It is this that raises the school fees, and is the prime factor in creating a separate class of school to meet their needs, a school where a high price must be paid not for superior education but for admission to the privileges of a gentleman's training. Food, clothes, and accommodation must be above a certain standard. If this standard is not accepted by any school the parents will send their children elsewhere. Complaints are made by educationalists of the lavish and luxurious way in which boys are brought up at home, and the injurious effect it has upon their health and character. A doctor has declared that many boys "are brought up at home in luxury to such a degree that the necessary result is the production of effeminacy." * School authorities are unable to stand up against this because they are bidding for the patronage of the richest class.

To go back to the very early age, when the first dawn of consciousness is breaking, no one can remember in themselves and no one can observe in an infant the first germination of childish intuitions. It is an inward process concealed from the outside world. No logical method nor the application of any scientific treatment can encourage or prevent the unfolding of these faculties. But rough and unsympathetic

* "The Public Schools from Within," 1906.

handling may bruise or damage the incipient growth which ought to be diligently watched. One may be inclined to wonder whether there is not a great deal of misconception of the child nature among grown-ups. The small child is treated as if all its faculties of thought and sentiment were exactly at the same stage of development as its powers of speech and expression. Even grown men of capacity may suffer from inability to express their thoughts in the form of speech. Now children, as a matter of fact, suffer unconsciously at a very early age from being unable to express themselves. Their mind, in addition to its natural intuitions, has, like a sensitive photographic plate, been passively receiving a multitude of impressions which have left their mark and convey some meaning. Latent mental powers are thus created in embryo far sooner than is supposed, because the child's powers of speech are taken as the complete test of its general mental growth. Every facility is speech depends for the most part on physical causes, and the power of expression is a faculty by itself, and not the representative of all other faculties. The thoughtful look on the face of a child, which is frequently interpreted as incomprehension—"It doesn't understand"—is more likely inward reflection that cannot yet find outlet in speech.

Talking to children in foolish baby language, and treating them as if they had to go through a period of infantile idiocy, and could be regarded as toys, is too often adopted as the proper

attitude. These small beings, if we only knew, despise these silly antics; they cannot correct us, but they are neither amused nor edified. What children like is to be spoken to from the first as rational beings and equals. The most fantastic fun and the most serious information conveyed in this way penetrate, and are received gratefully. It does not hinder rampageous fooling, because the child spirit is latent in the grown-up and hails an opportunity to escape, but it puts a stop to the note of patronage and stooping to another level, which children are quick to detect, and which spoils the complete sympathy of intercourse between them and their elders. Two special faculties exist in most children—imagination and reason, which, curiously enough, often go hand in hand. Nearly every child can be reached through one or the other. The more they are cultivated the better. Two extraordinarily foolish precepts are sometimes heard in direct opposition to this theory. One is, "Never tell a child anything that is not strictly true," and the other is, "Never allow a child to argue or ask why."

Children, more especially young children, are highly imaginative; their fancies may never become of any particular value in themselves, but these inward imaginings are dear to them, and can be made the means of setting up between them and their elders a perfect medium of communication. By utilising and very gently moulding these fancies the first glimpses of the general vision of life can be given them. The rude

suppression of the fanciful exercise of imagination deprives the child not only of a source of delight, but of one of the most important aids in its mental and spiritual expansion, and makes its relationship with grown-up people one of awe and respect, perhaps, but not of sympathy, confidence, and love. Unless, however, it is properly guided, imagination may simply become a riotous form of inattention. Naughtiness or mischief, the bugbear of nurses and governesses, is only misguided energy, and is frequently a symptom of strong character. In sternly disciplining it out of existence when it is merely wild, and untainted by deceitfulness, high spirits may be tamed and individuality may be crushed. Discipline, in fact, can do harm if injudiciously imposed. Self-discipline is his really important lesson.

Blind obedience, except in very rare cases, ought never to be enforced. As early as possible the child can always be told the why and the wherefore, treated, as already said, like a rational being. This naturally entails infinitely more trouble for the parent. But in addition to stimulating the reasoning faculty through his powers of observation, such treatment will encourage self-control and independence, and open out the road to the priceless property of personal initiative. Blind obedience means submission and the resignation of control to other hands. To his life's end that boy will have an indisposition to take back the control into his own hands again.

There is a great difference in showing boys

how to be manly and allowing them to indulge in a foolish imitation of what they think men do. So-called childishness is often suppressed in the desire to bring out as early as possible the manly characteristics and make the child conform to an approved model. But childishness is only a sign of slow development, and its suppression may mean checking some original growth that is taking its own time to emerge ; being original it may be of inestimable value, and none of the fixed patterns that are substituted for it can in that case make up for its loss.

It is worth remembering that anything done badly *by* a child is worth a hundred times more than something done well *for* a child. The child must take his time, and the proverbial patience required of parents and teachers comes as a perfect revelation to any one who undertakes either of these rôles for the first time. The whole study of a child's mind is one of the deepest interest. Many books have been written on it, and many more will be written in future.

But here a concrete problem is presented. The wonderful country houses, castles, and mansions, with all the heart of man or child can want, do not, as might be supposed, provide ideal homes for children. There is this much to be said, however, for many of the best homes. With beautiful gardens and surroundings, beautiful pictures and objects about them, gentlemen's children must undoubtedly gain some positive advantage. A natural good taste and an instinctive preference for good style, refinement, grace,

and beauty becomes their birthright. In this respect they are highly favoured by fortune. As children they cannot be expected to be aware of these special favours, and as grown men they too often show an intolerant disdain for those many less fortunate beings whose taste, style, and manner are either deficient or artificially cultivated. But the wealthy homes in which beauty and refinement are conspicuous by their absence have also to be reckoned with, and are probably more numerous. In either case it is plain that apart from the attitude of the parents, the general environment, so far as it is that of plenty, infinite choice and lavish profusion, is not conducive to the stimulation of fine mental or moral qualities, and in the long run does not add to the child's happiness.

By their sagacity and instinctive wisdom children show this themselves. They will cast aside an expensive mechanical toy, just given to them, of marvellous construction and amazing ingenuity, and return with joy to the cardboard lid with reels for wheels which they have made for themselves. Parents may learn a good deal from the wisdom of their smallest child.

The extreme on the one side of enthroning the child and sacrificing everything to it, and on the other side of allowing the child to suffer by neglect, can be easily enough avoided. Some of the elaborate educational schemes of faddists are not greatly to be recommended. But in a gentleman's home, where all conceivable comforts are at hand, care, attention, constant watchfulness,

and natural sympathy tempered by discrimination are within the reach of each one.

No hard and fast rules and regulations can be laid down on any one of the foregoing points discussed in this chapter. The most expert educationalist even would be reluctant to offer advice. Whatever plan is adopted, the unfortunate parent may be told how successful the exactly opposite treatment has been in some particular case. The attentive, watchful, sympathetic parent, who takes infinite pains, may come across one child of character, spontaneity, and intelligence whose short training has only been marked by thoughtless neglect or even cruelty, or another child of commonplace unresponsive dullness on whom every favour and advantage has been lavished. But this proves, not the uselessness of systematic attention, but the enormous force of the inborn character and the incomprehensible nature of the spiritual energy which directs it. Neglect may be accompanied by freedom, while over-solicitude may mean constant restraint.

The child of the aristocrat of to-day has a stiff battle before him. He comes out from his home possessed only of experiences of ease and luxury to mount an educational ladder specially constructed for him. The ladder might have led in the past to almost any position he wanted. But to-day he is beginning to feel that it is an ill-devised and out-of-date appliance not even warranted to help him to reach an ordinary standard of efficiency.

CHAPTER IX

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Private schools—Day schools—The object of Public Schools — Different systems of secondary education — The powerful influence of Public Schools—Their conservatism—Class prejudice — Luxurious surroundings—Disagreeable nature of mental work—The stereotyping process—The suppression of originality—The large class—The master—Examinations—Subjects of study—Absorption in games—Expenses—The gentleman at school—Opinion on failure of Public Schools—Strangers deceived by outward appearances.

Dotted about all over the country there are institutions known as Private or Preparatory Schools. These are the channels through which the large Public Schools are fed. So long as they charge more than ninepence a week private schools can escape inspection. It is open to any one to start an academy for young persons and to fill it by means of largely fictitious advertisements. The sole object of the private school is to prepare specimens of the proper raw material for the Public School mill. Some of them incidentally are conducted as successful financial enterprises—high fees and not too high salaries for the assistant-masters. The masters

in these schools and even in Public Schools do not need to have any special qualifications, whereas in the elementary school it requires a certificated teacher to instruct a poor man's child.

Some preparatory schools are much patronised as suitable reservoirs for certain Public Schools. "They are all so good now," we are told, "that it is quite difficult to choose between them." In what does this assumed excellence consist? They are unquestionably a great improvement on the old-fashioned ramshackle happy-go-lucky institutions of fifty years ago from the point of view of health, cleanliness, and comfort. They have swimming baths and airy dormitories, and also an admirable games master and a miniature rifle range. If they succeed in turning out the approved manly Public School boy, who will have the right amount of assurance, athletic proficiency, or capacity to win scholarships, they have accomplished their object. The Public Schools formulate the demand, the private schools adapt their curriculum to meet it. A successful private school may be a very paying concern, but it is an expensive institution. For board and education a large number of them charge from £100 to £150 per annum—a higher sum than the total of wages earned by many a workman who has to support himself and his family. But to this must be added a number of charges which come under the comprehensive title of extras, and another very serious item, which is

the boy's clothing, amounting even in these early days to at least £30 a year. He must be fitted out with suits appropriate for each occupation, designed and cut on an approved pattern. However conscientious a private school master may be, he is obliged to keep in view the entrance examination to the Public School, and the habits and customs that prevail in these larger institutions, in arranging the curriculum of his own establishment. Much that has to be said on the Public School system is, therefore, equally pertinent in the case of the preparatory institution. The day school is very exceptional, though one or two of the larger Public Schools take day boys. By this method boys may have the full advantage of the tuition, and of association with other boys in games and work without being entirely withdrawn for long periods from parental supervision.

A prominent and advanced ex-head master * recently remarked that it was the fashion in certain sections of English life to believe that people should send their boys whether it was necessary or not to a boarding school. He declared that was a great mistake. Such a school was not an ideal school ; there was much moral and intellectual wastage in connection with the barrack life of our great boarding schools.

These remarks called forth a great deal of correspondence, some expressing agreement, some

* The Bishop of Hereford.

disagreement.* The three main criticisms urged against a day school system are: (*a*) that the influence of some homes is by no means good, and it is therefore an advantage for a boy to be taken right away; (*b*) that masters have much greater difficulty in getting to know the boys if for a large part of the day they are altogether free from the control of the school; (*c*) that parents cannot choose the best discoverable school, but have to accept whatever school their neighbourhood may afford.

The chief objections to the boarding school in its "Great Public School" form are to be considered in this chapter. But in reply to these three points it may be said that: (*a*) It is very difficult to define a "bad home." If it is a veritable sink of corruption neither one system nor the other will save a boy from its evil influence. If it is merely lax and thoughtless, the presence of the boy in it while he is at the same time being taught and disciplined will not be without advantage, not only to the boy, but to the home. In any case, "bad homes" are the exception and should not be a governing factor. Moreover, there is no question of day schools being set up to the exclusion of all boarding schools. (*b*) Masters seldom get to know boys well except through work and games. (*c*) This is only true because the present boarding school is almost universally accepted.

But the main consideration is that parents are

* *Westminster Gazette*, November, 1911.

glad of the opportunity which the boarding school system offers to renounce their responsibilities completely for fixed periods in the year, the greater cost being of no consequence. And so long as this view prevails the day school is not likely to be generally popular with the richer classes.

Some of our Public Schools are very ancient foundations, dating back several centuries, but the vast majority of them were founded in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Winchester, Eton, and Westminster, and later Harrow, no doubt formed the model for those that were to follow. Although it was not the original intention of the founders, a system came to be set up of richly endowed autonomous establishments for dealing with the secondary education of gentlemen's sons, a system without parallel in other countries. It is, in fact, very difficult to explain to a foreigner that we segregate our upper-class children in special institutions by charging higher fees, not for superior education, but for the object of keeping certain children in a privileged position, free from the contact of the middle and the lower classes, because as gentlemen they are supposed to require the advantage of a particular sort of training, and, as far as possible, socially uncontaminated surroundings. The view held is that the divisions of education in this country should be longitudinal, that is to say, there should be a differentiation from the outset according to class divisions. The gentleman's son has his

own educational ladder, the preparatory school, the Public School, the University, which is entirely separated and different from education of the elementary type. The view that the divisions of education should be latitudinal, which prevails for instance in the United States, insures that the secondary school must be complementary to the elementary school, in which all classes alike receive their elementary training.

In Germany there is a differentiation of schools according to the curriculum adopted. There is in every school a definite organisation and aim. The parent is free to choose the exact type of education he prefers for his son when he selects either the Gymnasium, the Realgymnasium, or the Oberrealschule. We prefer to multiply the different courses in our Public Schools by instituting a modern side, an army class, or whatever special curriculum appears to be necessary, and thus a good deal of confusion and muddle is added to the course of study. But the most noteworthy difference in the German system is the free adoption of the day school system, which entirely obliterates the caste spirit in education above the elementary level, and thanks to which the sons of the nobility are not ashamed to sit on the school bench side by side with the children of the trading classes. The British public boarding school system is the strongest factor that exists in fostering class jealousy and exclusiveness. Germany is an aristocratically

governed country, and the advantages of their education system are to a large extent nullified, so far as class consciousness is concerned, by their political, social, and bureaucratic system. We are a far more democratically governed country, but a full extension of a democratic system of government is being checked by these relics, very deeply rooted, of aristocratic exclusiveness.

So long as the vicious circle was complete, the Public School system was difficult to attack and could remain undisturbed. That is to say, the father, well satisfied with his own early training, which appeared sufficient for him in the high posts reserved for him in after-life, or in the leisured ease he enjoyed, naturally desired his son to undergo a similar course—"What was good enough for me, my boy, will be good enough for you." But now there is a break in the circle, for the father is beginning to feel uncomfortable, prominent posts are no longer going to be reserved for him or his family, and his training is even in his own estimation ludicrously inadequate. He may therefore be asked to some purpose whether our Public School system has not completely broken down, and whether these exclusive institutions, both in their methods and organisation, are not in need of drastic reform.

The power and influence of the larger Public Schools cannot easily be over-estimated. Their very antiquity helps them. To be able to trace back the origins of a building, a family, or an

institution through the centuries and illustrate the stages of its growth with anecdote and record gleaned from ancient chronicles, creates a glamour and casts a spell that enthralls the historic sense, while it deadens the critical faculty. Here is a buttress, a window, a doorway that dates back some hundreds of years. The buttress now supports nothing, the window is blind, the doorway is blocked. But who would destroy them? They tell the story of a bygone age, linked by unbroken architectural growths with the present day. Here is a title still extant though the office it denoted has vanished. Here a custom which may seem meaningless, but its curious origin is known and we are loath to abolish it. And so out of parchment and stone a tradition is fabricated and preserved with the most reverent care. No one but a vandal would dare to lay rough hands on such a legacy from the past. The atmosphere thus created has in it much of the aroma of museums and of the Record Office. It can be found in full intensity round the ruins of a famous castle or abbey. But although no one would deny its wonderful charm, it is about as dangerous and destructive to the progressive development of a modern educational establishment as any evil influence that can be imagined. A critic may dig his knife deep down when he is dealing with some modern school established only a score of years ago—a school which is perhaps trying to grapple with the problems as they present themselves

in their most modern aspect. But should he even scratch the surface in his comments on one of our old Public Schools, a shower of execration will immediately fall upon him. In the former case he may scoff as much as he likes at new-fangled notions, fads, and experiments. But in the latter case his remonstrances will always be solemnly met with the excuse of tradition.

As a science education stands on a footing of its own, and it would seem to demand a complete severance from the obsolete and discarded notions of another age. It is an art as well as a science, and it requires constant refreshment in order that adaptability and adaptation to the rapid changes of environment may be continuous.

The best known of these schools, like the class they serve, have never been pioneers of enlightened thought and new ideas, but they have lagged behind until the force of outside opinion has dragged them on a step further. In institutions so steeped in conservatism, the more so when their roots are deeply buried in the past, the spirit of reform must ever be unwelcome and unpopular. Surely it is unfortunate that this should be the state of affairs in England's largest Public Schools, and yet the task of real innovation would be almost superhuman in such surroundings. Even advanced views on political and economic questions are regarded with suspicion. A recent instance may be taken of an event at a Public School recorded in a volume of reminiscences by one who was educated at that

School. "It is to be regretted that an agitator was two years ago allowed to address the school on the subject of unemployment from the chapel steps in the school yard. The vast majority of the parents of Eton boys do not wish their sons to be taught Socialism, and the school yard, so closely connected with the old traditions of Eton, is the very last place where any theories of this kind should be permitted to be aired. As a matter of fact the address, which under no circumstances could have done good, merely provoked giggling." * To hear that such a subject as unemployment should have only produced giggles from the well-fed sons of rich and prosperous parents shows how carefully guarded they are from being allowed even to reflect on great social problems. But more significant still is the approving tone in which the incident is related. It is a true index of the Public School spirit.

"If liberal sentiments are to be proscribed in the teachers," says one writer in his description of the large Public Schools,† "if a slavish adherence to obsolete prejudices is to be considered a virtue, and a disinterested effort to correct abuses is to be treated as a crime, the public will do well to reflect whether they can suffer the liberty of a great Public School to be restricted without endangering the liberty of England." On the other hand, the vulgar claptrap of jingoism or a bloated and arrogant

* "Floreat Etona," Ralph Nevill.

† "Our Public Schools."

form of Imperialism is supposed to appeal to the boy mind, and is very much encouraged. Last year the prize for English poetry was given at a large Public School to a boy who, having imbibed these ideas, wrote :—

> "England, narrow seas divide thee
> From the foe :
> Guard the waves lest ill betide thee,
> Lest the foe that lurks beside thee
> Lay thee low."

This may be good poetry but it is deplorable sentiment. The combative instinct is fostered, and hatred of the foreigner, about whom the boys are taught nothing, is regarded as a sign of patriotism.

Public School boys go out into the world for the most part ill-educated and saturated with class prejudice, which is the one thing they are really successfully taught. No attempt is made to destroy the confidence which many of them are taught at home to repose in money—the desirability of having much and making more. They remain jealous guardians of the old traditions under which they were brought up. The masters, too, are for the most part "old boys" of the same school. And so these schools go on, subsidised in some cases by private munificence, backed by the adulation of their own progeny, bound by conventions, oblivious of failures, and paying very little heed to the rapid development in the nation's life outside. In time past there has been a certain amount of competition between

them, but in the twentieth century it is not this sort of rivalry that these schools have to face, but the approaching wave of an enlightened democracy, which demands of its agents, its officers, and its leaders a great deal more than our Public Schools are at present prepared to give them.

A special word must be said about this class prejudice, which has already been referred to more than once. Some of the larger Public Schools are far more tainted with it than others. But it would be invidious to particularise, as none are without blemish in this respect.

Boys * as boys are quite devoid of the consciousness of class, they are far too spontaneous, natural, and trusting. Boys as gentlemen's sons, as shown in a former chapter, have become thoroughly accustomed to an atmosphere where service and attendance are accepted in the natural course, and where the view that nineteen-twentieths of the race are provided to serve the remaining twentieth is regarded as a scientific law. Boys as schoolboys are further encouraged in this belief when they find that there are institutions exclusively established for them as gentlemen's sons, where they need only associate with other boys who are more or less in similar circumstances to themselves. The fiction of their superiority gains ground, though they are told as gentlemen never to appear conscious of it.

* The inmates of other secondary schools are generally referred to as "lads"—another class distinction.

Some are going to do nothing in particular, others are to go into the Army, the Church, the Bar, the Civil Service, or the City, or may become in their turn schoolmasters. There are other professions into which gentlemen's sons are known to go if they happen to be poor, but laborious effort is irksome, and to sacrifice one's life to an arduous occupation is regarded as a calamity which should be avoided at all costs. It may be noted in parenthesis that the Navy is the one gentleman's profession that is no longer fed by our Public Schools. We take the Navy seriously, and we apparently do not want to risk the chance of filling it with the ill-trained produce of these institutions.

Outside these professions the boy is conscious of a host of people of the same class as the footman and housemaid at home—people who generally leave out their "h's." This leaving out of "h's" and accent remains for many of them the ultimate test as to whether people are "possible" or "impossible." They cannot help seeing labourers, artisans, porters, cabmen, shopmen at work; perhaps the hive of a factory may have been witnessed by some, or the ant's nest of a mine. But all these people down in the foundations of industrial life are quite remote and unknown. Their importance must be secondary to that of people on the top who figure prominently in the public eye. The boys are not taught to despise them, they simply ignore them. They have no remote idea of how the wealth of

a nation is built up, how the business of a nation is carried on, or even how their own needs and requirements are satisfied. Why, therefore, should they know anything of the people who are chiefly concerned in these processes. No world really exists for them except the one to which they belong—the world the Press makes so much of, in which figure names of the leading lights of society, of politics, of the Army and Navy, of the sporting world, of the stage, and, perhaps, of literature.

The point of view thus cultivated is not the result of chance neglect, but is intentionally fostered in order to support the whole principle of aristocratic government. The curriculum is arranged not on lines of utility, but to give the cachet of gentility. The compulsory classical education was supposed to brand the boy as a Public School boy, and, therefore, as a gentleman. The preference for the "humanities" over scientific studies originates more from their being a distinction of class than from any æsthetic appreciation of their true value. It was because the knowledge of Greek had become the mark of a disdainful and exclusive caste, and not because he despised Greek in itself, that Robert Burns wrote:—

"A set o' dull, conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!"

So strong is this class prejudice that no boy can go through school-life without to a certain degree being affected by it. Some people might prefer to call it class loyalty, and as such they would be ready to acknowledge that it may become the ultimate determining factor in deciding their own preferences and guiding their sympathies. Its existence, anyhow, is not a figment of the imagination, but a hard and solid fact. To quote once more the author of the Reminiscences: "In spite of Socialists and Sentimentalists 'all men are born unequal,' and our ancestors were fully alive to the odious affectation of ignoring social distinctions, which always have existed and always must exist in every society." No one, indeed, could visit an average upper-class family without constantly hearing jarring remarks by which the members of the family reveal themselves. The effect of it is ineradicable, and it produces from the other side class hatred. "Class antagonism is a very powerful force, growing rather than diminishing, acting in all sorts of unsuspected ways, cropping up in all sorts of unexpected places. Let things go wrong, make a false step, and in a moment it flashes out, 'Ignorant fellow,' 'Bloody gen'leman.'" * When people hold up their hands in pious horror at violent anti-class invective, let them consider more closely where the cause for this class denunciation from the masses really lies.

There can, of course, be no idea of sweeping

* "Seems So," Stephen Reynolds.

away class differences by the wave of a wand. Such expressions as "the brotherhood of man" must, as human nature is at present constituted, be figures of speech, denoting pious aspirations. But the basis on which these class differences now rest is a fair object of criticism, and the encouragement and cherishing of prejudice between classes should not be allowed to escape wholesale condemnation. If the fuller development of human faculties and talents is the essence of progress, as we may fairly assume it to be, and if these faculties and talents are by a system of sharp class distinctions starved and sterilised by want on one side, and emasculated and stunted by superabundance on the other, we may regard mutual knowledge, mutual sympathy, mutual co-operation, as a means of abolishing *artificial* inequalities and bringing to light *natural* differences in capacity. A change in the educational process by itself might not suffice to bring about any appreciable alteration in the present condition of affairs. There are numbers of other political, social, and religious forces which must assist. But if very special stress is laid on education it is because, in dealing with youth, we are really dealing with the future, where the unrealised hopes of to-day may have a better chance.

One of the artificial agencies which is instrumental in producing the sentiments described above, and which from the point of view of the training of youth is distinctly harmful, is

the luxurious surroundings of the modern schoolboy. The blame rests here more with the parents than with school authorities, but the evil is one that is growing because of the increasing number of the sons of *nouveaux riches* parents who are sent to these schools to make fashionable friends and by that process to be turned into gentlemen. Organised as they are, how can Public Schools stand out against the demands of plutocratic parvenus?

In the eighteenth century a schoolboy had to make his own bed, sweep out the dormitory, and put his head under the college pump for a morning wash. In the last generation even there was a certain strenuous simplicity about school-life, and perhaps an occasional element of physical hardship. The rules of hygiene are now better understood and can prevent anything that means danger to health, and the rules of common sense can prevent an unnecessarily stoical discipline. But in the food, clothes, accommodation and routine of the Public School boy of to-day there is no remote trace of austerity. On the contrary, there is a distinct tendency to pamper and coddle, and thereby to soften not only the physical but the moral fibre of the boys. The physical side of their lives is made as smooth and easy as possible, while the real tough, rough, hard business is reserved for the mental work. Mr. Arthur Benson rightly says: "We should never expect a boy to become a good player at any game unless he enjoyed it, and how we

dare to exclude enjoyment so rigorously from our system of education is one of those mysteries that it is difficult to fathom." How many Public School boys retain any knowledge of Greek, for instance, or the smallest desire to continue the studies of Greek authors unless some examination compels them? An infinitesimal number. It is not the dryness of Greek literature that repels them, nor is their general intelligence so hopelessly obtuse that they are entirely incapable of assimilating learning of this description. It is the purposeless and desiccated presentment of the subject that deprives it of any of its natural powers of attraction. Punishments and impositions set by way of writing out hundreds of lines, or learning set passages by heart, have given boys a lifelong detestation of certain of the literary classics, and are harmful in all ways. A stiff bit of physical toil might be made sufficiently disagreeable to be a suitable punishment, while it would always be beneficial to their bodies. Mental discipline and the sense of effort about learning cannot be and assuredly should not be eliminated. But there is such a thing as pleasant effort and disagreeable effort. A boy's work at school is almost entirely of the latter sort.

The want of restraint in the matter of expenditure on clothes is another outcome of the wealthy materialistic homes. It produces dressiness and a foolish appreciation of sartorial smartness and of the spectacular side of life. There is hardly any type of human being more despicable than

an overdressed man except, perhaps, a greedy woman. Most boys pass through a dressy phase because the tendency of school is to magnify its importance.

Compare a photograph of a group of school boys of to-day with one of only forty or fifty years ago. The comparison is instructive. In the latter boys will be seen lounging about in different attitudes with a curious variety of costumes. If it is a football eleven they will be in varied and strange garments, with their trousers tucked into their socks, some bare-headed, some with ill-fitting caps and old shrunken shirts, others perhaps neater, but each one individual and distinct. The group of to-day consists of two or three rows of boys beautifully turned out with immaculate, perfectly fitting clothing. In the football eleven each will wear a cap, shirt, shorts, stockings of precisely the same pattern. They stand and sit so that the line of the peaks of their caps, of their folded arms, of their bare knees is mathematically level. And even their faces! You can hardly tell one from another. A group of military officers will give the same effect. Wrinkled tunics, whiskers, unconventional attire, and freedom of attitude in one, and in the other perfect fit (a wrinkle in an officer's tunic is a worse offence than any fault in his character), perfect figures, perfect boots, and perfect symmetry of grouping.

Now no one will say that this can be accounted

for by the improvement in the tailors' art and an artistic desire for regularity in the photographer. It is, without doubt, an outward and visible sign not only of the love of the appearance of smartness, but of the stereotyping and conventionalising effect of our modern educational system. This stereotyping, which in many other ways is very noticeable, constitutes perhaps the strongest indictment that has to be brought against our Public Schools.

It is a grave fault which is common to all sorts and conditions of schools in Great Britain. But it is more acute in schools that have to deal with a restricted class who have already, by the atmosphere in their homes, been, so to speak, standardised as a type. The material that has to be dealt with by school education is the most puzzling, the most complex, the most mysterious and unknown that exists in the world. In geology, botany, zoology, and chemistry the unknown exists, but its sphere is continually being further diminished. In psychology, besides the much larger sphere of the unknown, there is the realm of the unknowable, and even the range of the unknown remains practically unaltered by the ingenious philosophic speculations of succeeding centuries. Now youth is operated upon in schools at a moment when the psychological problem is most incomprehensible. Immature brains, unformed characters, undeveloped talents, untrained minds make up an intensely susceptible, very sensitive, quite illusive,

and yet perfectly docile composition. Let us for a moment imagine an absolutely ideal set of influences brought to bear on the complicated gelatinous material. It would mean the encouragement and strengthening of desirable, the repression of undesirable, qualities, and a general stimulation of the whole nature. This, of course, involves a superhuman insight into what is desirable and what undesirable. There would be a vigilant watching of the various characteristics, the culture of originality, the study of temperament. Boys could not be herded together according to age, any more than they could be classified educationally according to height or the colour of their hair. Not even mental capacity would be the final test, and it is doubtful if the herding of boys would be in any case desirable, since each one represents in himself an entirely fresh problem. But it is needless to speculate further. This alone shows how infinitely complicated the problem is, and how delicate a process the flowering of the human bud is.

The idea of separate individual treatment is of course purely theoretic and quite impracticable. But what of the system which we all seem to approve? We set up an iron mould and we purposely and intentionally stamp out and bake the soft clay into a fixed pattern. We sacrifice individuality and suppress originality so as to produce a conventional average type. Uniformity is the ideal, and as the material is

still malleable, responsive, and yielding the stamping process can be carried out effectively. If the ultimate result were good, the efficacy of such a system could not be questioned. But since the utter failure of this clumsy handling of the mind and soul of youth is becoming more apparent the voice of protest can no longer be ignored. It is now known in relation to food that a fixed diet which in its composition satisfies all the requirements for digestion and nourishment, and on paper comes up to the proper standard in protein and fuel value, may entirely fail to be nutritious, because appetite and digestion depend mainly on the relish and gusto with which food is eaten, and therefore individual tastes must be consulted and diversity of taste recognised if food is to give health and strength to the body. The mental and moral appetite ought to be treated in just the same way.

It may be argued that a set, average training must be decided upon, because it is the average boy that has for the most part to be dealt with. The so-called average type, it is probably thought, wears better in this world and can stand the strain of life with less emotional damage. Sensitive and nervous temperaments, responding readily to exaltation or depression, ought therefore not to be encouraged. But where there is infinite variety there can be no such thing as an average. It is the unimaginative, short-sighted method of training from the earliest years that produces an average type, and that

average is then declared to be the ideal. Boys of marked character it may be said will always emerge and assert themselves in defiance of any restrictions and limitations placed on their education. To a certain extent this is true. But the mischief is that in herding boys together, dividing them into large classes, and setting up a stereotyped model of superficial efficiency there is a great loss of unknown but valuable qualities and a waste and destruction of embryonic talent, not talent for scholarship or talent for games, but a more useful talent, the genius for living. Even the so-called average boy has distinctive character, and it is just this treatment that stunts it and prevents it from emerging. Boys may be shy of originality or eccentricity, but it is the schoolmasters who are really frightened of it, because they do not know how to deal with it or how to prescribe for it under their cut-and-dried system. An eccentric or original boy in a class of from twenty to thirty is merely a nuisance. His rough edges must be pared off, and he must be made to conform.

It has been truly said that education is purely mechanical until the faculty of criticism and preference has been awakened. If it were not mechanical, then the boys would become inconveniently different, and the very inadequate machinery of the modern school would break down. There is no need to complain of the tutorial system, but the large class, which is one of the engines for stamping the mould, is an

impossible means of setting up any satisfactory communication between master and pupil. "It deprives the boy of the essence of education, for the hints, suggestions, warnings, and protests spoken to him alone abide more firmly in his memory than any exhortation given to the whole class. . . . A teacher is not a machine for keeping discipline or delivering lectures to great numbers: his highest function is to study an ambitious boy, to quicken another who is lazy, to clear another who is confused, to know and to guide each, not merely to inform all." * The boys in the class who are slow, unappreciative, listless, inattentive are at once condemned as being at fault, whereas it is often the case that the method of the master is at fault. Precocity is by no means a sign of sound mental development. But the precocious boy is generally the master's favourite. By gaining prizes and scholarships he will help to enhance the reputation of the school and act as a sort of advertisement.

A method that suits nine boys may not suit the tenth. It frequently happens that a boy who is a slow developer, whose mind is taking a long time to mature, appears dull because the rest are going rather too fast for him. The lessons are set nearer to the capacities of the majority, the slow boy loses the thread, loses interest, is pronounced stupid, and soon becomes discouraged. An example might be given of a boy

* "Across the Bridges," Alexander Paterson.

who with one tutor in a small private class was interested, alert, and easily taught. When he went to the large class he became bewildered and listless, he lost contact with the mind of the master, and failed continually to be up to the average. Method when applied to a large number must be unyielding and machine-like. As a channel for the communication of instruction by its indiscriminating character it may fail even more often than it succeeds. Each unit differs: some are receptive, others impervious, some imaginative, others dull, some weakly, others vigorous, some nimble-witted, others slow. But the method meanwhile is uniform for all.

A methodically instructed mind succeeds very often in the examination and comes up to the worldly estimate of what passes as success. But compare it with a mind where growth from within has been encouraged and no superimposed layers of useful information have been plastered on from without. The one works according to method, the other according to instinct. The former will be capable, proficient, systematic, working in obedience to set rules and regulations, accepting authority, concentrating on detail. But when there is no rule that applies, when a case arises outside the regulations, when life offers a problem for solution that has not been mentioned in the text-books, he flounders and is completely nonplussed. The latter is in the popular sense ill-informed and hopelessly inept when confronted with work of a purely mechanical

nature ; he cannot be relied on for knowledge of the elements, but, in spite of continual failure in the worldly sense, he may be capable of remarkable achievements, and is never at a loss. He is spontaneous, depending on an inward spring of self-reliance which is unfailing, not on an outward wash which has been concocted from other people's prescriptions. Give him a little sensible and not too stringent disciplinary method, and cultivate in his fellows the inward consciousness of the power of initiation and the value of imagination, and a very much higher average in results would ensue. Resourcefulness is a British characteristic. More than this, it is often a gentleman's characteristic. For he gets by his varying environment a knowledge of humanity, of the *usage du monde*, and, if he is at all intelligent, a rational perception of the fitness of things, their applicability and relevance which a man with a narrow technical mind may be blind to. But, again, resourcefulness is not positive enough in itself nor powerful enough by itself ; it requires a substructure of knowledge.

The system which aims at prizes and class lists makes another victim in addition to the boy, and that is the master. But he is not to blame, because the task of instructing properly twenty to thirty boys is a physical impossibility. It is curious that masters, if they are picked men, should so readily submit to these restrictions. They are generally picked for their scholastic

attainments or athletic prowess, and not for their teaching capacity. A comparatively uninstructed man may make an extraordinarily good teacher, while the ripest scholar may be a complete failure in that capacity.

But in the long run the master suffers as much as the boy. The instrument is blunted by being wrongly guided just as much as the material is injured. You may spoil the edge of a chisel by holding it at the wrong angle just as much as you may tear the wood. Year after year the masters watch scores of boys passing through their hands, and within the narrow confines of a well-worn groove they despair of making the impression or exercising the influence they want. They are driven along and forced to acquiesce. Their efforts are deprived of all spontaneity, they are cramped, and in time can hardly resist becoming stale and indifferent. Their lack of inspiration, of freedom, of zest begins to react on succeeding generations of boys. No other profession exists in which the difficulties are so complex and unrecognised, the temptations so insinuating, the credit accorded to which is so slight, and the profit derived from which is so scanty. "A noble profession if a man is fitted for it by moral and intellectual gifts and will throw his whole heart into it; and also the most dreary and dishonest of professions if undertaken only for the love of gain or hope of preferment." * And yet there is no calling that is

* "College Sermons," B. Jowett.

of more vital importance in the life of an individual, of a community, and of a nation. Any desires masters may have for change or reform soon vanish, they become inured to the system and accommodate themselves to its limitations so successfully that they often end by defending it. But the case of the master is a thesis in itself and must not be pursued further.

The settlement of the larger problems of education must be dealt with outside the walls of schools. But in many minor matters the old Public Schools have so strong an influence that they might well set a better example. No modern seminary, however enterprising, can hope to compete with the accumulated strength of an ancient reputation. But there is very little possibility of any alteration in the pernicious stereotyping process so long as five hundred to a thousand boys are congregated together with an average of one master to thirty boys.

A further obstacle to the production of a high standard of general industry has to be met in the richer schools, because so many boys have no prospect of having to earn their own living and are therefore careless as to learning. They will only do what they are forced to do. "It is the misfortune not the fault of Eton that she harbours so many eldest sons." *

It is usual to bestow almost unqualified praise

* The Right Hon. Alfred Lyttelton in "Great Public Schools."

on our Public Schools,* and successful results are quoted as proof of the excellence of the system. But any one who is a believer in the natural characteristics of the British race will know that there are certain innate qualities that make the original material exceptional, and its superior quality is apparent even after it has gone through this very indifferent treatment. It is in spite of and not because of this training that any are able to distinguish themselves in after life.

It would be untrue to say that there are no advantages. So far as boys derive from their school associations a sense of loyalty, of *esprit de corps*, a reverence derived from inspiring surroundings, an appreciation of corporate action, self-reliance, and a proper instinct for honourable dealing and for consideration of their fellows it is all to the good. But in so far as they are prevented from developing on natural lines, in so far as they are subjected to a rigid mechanical discipline, and impregnated with a class-conscious conventional view, learn to hate their work and are taught to worship worldly success, they will suffer severely. Some may do well in the various positions of responsibility which are allotted to them; but how much better might many of them do if only their training were the result of some scientific guiding principle, instead of a

* " . . . Eton to my mind is the supreme scholastic educational establishment in the whole world."—Lord Rosebery at Eton Society Centenary Dinner, July 14, 1911.

haphazard set of customs based on a narrow tradition.

The instruction they get is regulated solely by examination—that is, judged by results. Examinations make or mar careers. They are the supreme and sole test of capacity, efficiency, and scholarship. In an interesting book lately published on education in general an expert, who has devoted his life to the work, admits that "the examination with its demand for machine-made results controls education. . . . In the schools that prepare little boys for 'the Great Public Schools' the whole scheme of education is dominated by the head masters' desire to win as many entrance scholarships as possible. In 'the Great Public Schools' the scheme of education is similarly dominated by the head masters' desire to win as many scholarships as possible at the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges. In the Universities all the undergraduates are without exception reading for examinations of various kinds." *

More accurately speaking, it is not the actual examination but the necessity of passing examinations that is so pernicious. An examination by the master of a class set for the purpose of ascertaining if and how his pupils are assimilating his instruction and how they or he are failing would be a very different thing. But there would be no "first," "second," "third," no "passed" and "failed," and therefore it would in no way

* "What Is and What Might Be," E. Holmes.

resemble what is at present known as the examination test.

The preparation for these examinations has become the avowed aim and object of education. The absorption of classified and systematised information is the approved method of preparation. The amount of pure parrot knowledge cannot be estimated, and next to the parrot knowledge of names, formulas, and definitions the unintelligent learning of scraps and bits—line 18 to line 32, but do not look at line 17, or inquire what happens on line 33—this is just what is wanted for examinations, and remarkably unintelligent and unenlightened youths gain great proficiency in this special method of learning. It is not a way of whetting the intellectual appetite; on the contrary, it often permanently nauseates it. A head master has declared that "great men in spite of their affection for their schools often look back to them as a time of intellectual waste." * "Intellectual life is left to take care of itself," † says another master. This opinion is endorsed by an old Etonian recently writing: "when I left . . . I was quite unfitted to earn my living in any walk of life: and I know, as I have said, not a few others who must and do admit the same." ‡

It would be outside the province of a general critic who does not pretend to be a specialist to

* Dr. Welldon, Head Masters' Conference, 1890.

† A. C. Benson, *The Schoolmaster*.

‡ Edmund Bosanquet, *Daily Mail*, August 5, 1912.

expatiate on methods of tuition, the principles of pedagogy, or subjects for instruction, to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a classical or non-classical course, or to define what constitutes a good brain exercise and how far mental gymnastics aid or hinder the acquisition of real knowledge. But in considering the class with which we are dealing, and knowing the opportunities and social advantages which belong to it, any one may be struck by the palpable inadequacy of the Public School course of training. It is the omissions that claim attention.

Brain exercise may be necessary up to a point, but with it should be combined guidance to certain avenues of knowledge with an endeavour to stimulate a desire to pursue investigation along those avenues farther. There is no time to teach a boy everything. Indeed, he cannot be made to learn all that it is important for him to know. But as he is of an inquiring turn of mind, in addition to actual set studies, lines of thought can be suggested to him by means of the familiar facts and phenomena that surround him. For instance, how many Public School boys could tell the average wage of an agricultural labourer in any district, the price of sugar per pound, or the difference between rates and taxes? It is true that the examination test blocks the road, because it prevents the awakening of real interest and spoils the thirst for knowledge. But there are certain subjects which would seem in any circumstances to be absolutely essential in training the

sons of a class who still have in their hands a great deal of authority, and constitute to some degree a governing class.

A Public School boy might be taught his own language, and, in addition to that, something of the following subjects:—

How his country is governed, and the divisions and functions of the governing authority and of subordinate authorities.

The history of his country in *recent* years, working backwards in detail after a general survey, and not forwards from William the Conqueror, always sticking somewhere amongst the Georges.

The elements of political economy, so that he may see the meaning of some of the familiar facts which he comes across in everyday life.

The elements of industrial history.

Some general comparison of the political, social, and economic state of the chief countries in the world.

One of the branches of natural science pursued beyond the elementary stage.

These subjects must not be regarded as studies reserved only for the more advanced scholars, but as alternatives within the reach of all the older boys. If preparation for citizenship is accepted as one of the objects of a boy's education, some information with regard to our national institutions and a broader conception

of his duties, obligations, and responsibilities should be given to him. The object is not to produce a well-informed prig, but an intelligent citizen.

There is another obstacle to satisfactory instruction being given. "An entire absorption in games to the exclusion of practically all other interests cannot be called a healthy feature of education." * Or, to put it in the words of a master,† "So long as the tone of our Public Schools both among teachers and taught exalts play to the rank of a serious business, and thinks it no dishonour to spend some years of valuable time at great cost to parents in doing little else but play, so long will they contribute to satisfaction with mere amateur efforts in business, in diplomacy, or in war, which has so often cost England dear."

It is not improbable that the other causes already mentioned have contributed more to the "mere amateur efforts" than the worship of athletics. It must be remembered that if any self-government is allowed to the boys—and it certainly should be—they will naturally prefer to idolise a good runner, a good bat, or a good oar rather than a good scholar. Nor is there any great harm in this. Owing to the dreary character of their school work they very naturally become absorbed in athletics as something they can really enjoy. An old Wykehamist

* "Floreat Etona," Ralph Nevill.

† "Public Schools from Within," 1906.

gives a very good idea of this sentiment. Speaking of a certain head master, he says he "liked Attic Greek a great deal better than athletics of any kind. We, or the majority of us, decidedly did *not*; and if Plato could have come down to the river in the flesh we should have drowned him to a certainty. We liked Homer and the Greek plays, barring the Choruses, but bother that Plato—he was a great ruffian who never ought to have lived. I speak for the division who loved cricket and football more than Plato." And of the same master he adds: "He evidently made boys thoroughly understand what he taught, though I am afraid he often talked to those whose minds were in the cricket field." *

There is something essentially healthy in vigorous outdoor exercise, and no one would wish to see our playing fields exchanged for the back-yard of the French *lycée*. It is the professional element that has helped to spoil the amusement and distraction which games should afford. The publicity given outside the schools to athletic pre-eminence is harmful. At quite an early age the boys find their names in the *Sportsman* and other newspapers. The unhealthy excitement of public renown begins for them, and the sporting Press becomes their main literary consumption. Moreover, the richer boys, who are not preparing for any profession and who regard education only as a disagreeable necessity, have every opportunity at home for perfecting themselves in

* Mr. Frederick Gale in "Great Public Schools."

games, and by this means become the leaders and set the tone, which is very often one of swagger and conceit. Boys ought of course to be discouraged from loafing, because the habit of desultory idleness is of all the most pernicious and most likely to lead to evil consequences. Games and sports help to fill up the large amount of leisure they are to enjoy when they grow up. But there are a number of ways, both pleasant and instructive, in which boys could be occupied, which would allow more freedom of choice to those who derive no benefit from being dragooned into rigid athletic organisations. It is again a case of greater attention being paid to individual taste and inclination, and some means of escape being provided from the enforced dead level of hard-and-fast regulation. To say that cricket, football, fives, and athletic sports are the only possible occupations for a boy's leisure is to display a complete ignorance of what boys like and what boys should be taught. Those enterprising schools which allow the boys in their leisure opportunities for developing any hobby for collecting, or taste for natural history, gardening, engineering, building, riding, exploring in addition to, not in substitution of, the ordinary games are finding the system highly advantageous, because they recognise the importance of educating the muscles simultaneously with the mind.

The difficulty in this, as in much else, is insurmountable so long as you have to deal with

many hundreds of boys instead of a manageable quantity. But the object of schools, more especially the smaller ones, is to increase and not to diminish their numbers.

The expense of athletic outfits, flannels, scarves, stockings, caps of various colours, football boots, cricket boots, fives shoes, &c., adds considerably to the general cost. When all is told and the many subjects counted as extras are included, not much is left over out of £300 a year for the keep, clothing, and education of a boy in one of the larger Public Schools, and £200 a year is a minimum in the smaller schools.* "It

* Fees for boys not on the foundation, *exclusive of all extras* ("Public Schools Year Book"):—

Eton ...	Entrance fee ...	£21 0 0		
	School fee ...	30 0 0		
	House fee ...	115 10 0		
	Private classical tuition	21 0 0		
			£187	10 0
Winchester	Entrance	£12 0 0		
	Tuition and board	127 0 0		
			£139	0 0
Harrow ...	Entrance	£10 0 0		
	Tuition	60 0 0		
	Board	90 0 0		
			£160	0 0
Rugby ...	Entrance	£7 7 0		
	Tuition	50 16 0		
	Board	72 7 6		
			£130	10 6
Marlborough	Tuition and board		£110	0 0
Charterhouse	Tuition	£31 10 0		
	Board	84 0 0		
			£115	10 0

should be owned," says a prominent old Etonian,* "that Eton is rather expensive. The school charges are not indeed heavier, if so heavy, as those of some other of the great Public Schools, but there is an air of wealth and a large way of looking at things absolutely inevitable in a place whither so many congregate who, having taken the trouble to be born, are relieved by circumstances from the necessity of further labour. In any community expenditure tends to follow the lead of the wealthiest, and among average young Englishmen it requires the glorious enterprise of an imprudent marriage to induce an effective economy."

An Eton boy costs his parents more than £300 a year. It is this prohibitive price which prevents the sons of poorer men from competing in these schools, unless a few come in as scholars on the foundation. This fact alone summarises the character of the British Public School and makes it unique. Nevertheless, men who can ill afford it scrape together all the money they can in order to have the pride and glory of sending their boys to a "Great Public School." And they are often made to repent their parental ambition when in later years their son is thrown back on their hands incapable of earning his own living. For it is openly admitted that it is not the object of some of these institutions to fit boys for professional work. Commenting

* The Right Hon. Alfred Lyttelton in "Great Public Schools."

on a reduction of numbers at Eton in recent years, and assigning rather naïvely as a cause of this the financial policy of the Liberal Government, a local newspaper remarked: "The consequence is that they [the parents] have to face the prospects of their sons, instead of training for a parliamentary or other career where an ample private income is necessary, having to earn their own living and are giving them a more commercial education." * The prospects of the sons of the aristocracy having to buckle to in order to earn their own living is regarded, in fact, as a calamity.

It may be noted in passing that Denmark has evolved a system of boarding-schools which has educated nine-tenths of the managers of her eleven hundred co-operative dairies and one-third of her members of Parliament at the inclusive cost of nine shillings a week.† In no country in the world is the cost as high as it is here.

A Public School boy is generally sorry to leave his school. The life has many attractions, and he is at an age when the worrying responsibility of choice is naturally withheld from him. Corporate life is pleasant and even stimulating on its competitive side, and boys may be found who prefer it to home life. But this is common to most schools, and these sentiments would be accentuated rather than mitigated were the boy able to look back on his Public School days in

* *Windsor Chronicle*, February, 1912.

† J. S. Thornton, "Schools of Northern Europe."

after life and with gratitude acknowledge that his training had been a help to him in his profession and a comfort and resource to him in his life. The benefits, unfortunately, are more than counterbalanced by the drawbacks. The good effects are ephemeral rather than lasting; the bad effects are legacies for a lifetime.

A boy who is a gentleman, in the moral sense as well as in the social sense, is not going to have that modicum of virtue extracted from him at school or anywhere else. The boy who is a gentleman in the moral sense, but has not the requisite social status, does not go to one of the "Great Public Schools" simply because he cannot afford it.

Now comes the boy who is not a gentleman in the moral sense, but is a gentleman in the social sense because he has money. As already pointed out, he is sent to these establishments "to be made into a gentleman." In after-life he can boast of his school and the friends he made there, but it is doubtful if very much benefit comes to him from associating with other boys of greater refinement. Many parents send their sons to the best-known Public School with this object. But a boy or man may associate with gentlemen all his life without ever becoming one, and it is really too much to ask that special establishments should be kept going to assist the ambitions of "climbers." Public Schools cannot, any more than any other power on earth, make boys gentlemen in the

moral sense. The training they give, moral, intellectual, and physical, may have suited idlers of another age, but is insufficient for any man who desires to take a part in modern life, whether it be domestic, professional, municipal, or national. The expensive and exclusive system has broken down. And this fact is beginning to present itself as a very critical problem. A full endorsement of this view came recently from the Head Master of Manchester Grammar School,* who said :—

"It was one of the great disappointments of English education that though our Public Schools were models to the world of what corporate life should be, yet that corporate feeling of the Public School boy had never translated itself as it should have done into effective civic action. For the most part, the Public School boy had not that adequate sense of obligation which the privileges of his education ought to have begotten in him. He was narrow not only in his knowledge, in his outlook, and in municipal things, but he was narrow in his social life. He was content to look on and criticise when it ought to be the passion of his heart to be in the middle of the fight helping and serving his species. . . . A system of education that had produced men capable of callous isolation was a system of education that stood condemned. It was, unfortunately, only a too true description of the great majority of boys attending Public

* Mr. J. L. Paton, M.A.

Schools that, having been born with silver spoons in their mouths, and having formed and having been trained to form expectations, they never learned to do things for themselves."

Strangers are liable to be deceived by the outward attractions of our Public Schools. The neatly dressed, manly, well-groomed boys strolling beneath the towers and spires of ancient buildings, or disporting themselves in gay costumes in their beautiful playing-grounds present an alluring picture; and the strangers, more especially when they come from across the Atlantic, are ready to pronounce such establishments ideal. "That is what makes the English gentleman what he is!" they will exclaim. They are right, and that is precisely the very essence of our complaint.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Necessity of religion as a groundwork of education—Preference for Established Church—The Catechism—The children of wrath—The spirit of perfection—Attitude of parents on religion — School routine — Scripture history—Chapel—Lack of moral training—Avoidance of real Christian teaching—Orthodox beliefs not real religion—How boys are affected.

If we accept the idea that education should not be a preparation for examinations, mental gymnastics, or the stuffing of young heads with scraps of information, but the building up of character, the discipline of instincts, and the guidance of morals, the teaching of religion should act as the principal basis and groundwork. Religion is a better word to use than morality in this connection, because, if relieved of all the complications of ceremonial worship which have little or nothing to do with real religion, it implies an inspired form of expansive idealism, while the word "morality" is apt to suggest a codified set of precepts.

The Church has still, to a large degree, the control and supervision of educational establish-

ments, and the head master is as a rule a clergyman, or has been so till quite lately. This close relation between learning and the devotional function of the community is almost prehistoric. The priests alone were able to give instruction in the manners of approaching and propitiating the divine or demoniac powers, and they alone possessed the requisite knowledge of "supernatural etiquette." They have never lost this hold, and an immense amount of ritual and ceremonial is engrained in our older Public Schools and Universities, as they all started as definitely religious establishments.

But to what end is the religious control utilised in British Public Schools? Is it to formalism and the superficial knowledge of dogmas and the mechanical performance of certain rites? or is it to ethical and moral guidance? Is the spiritual life something to be cultivated quite separately? or is it the essence which lies at the back of every thought and action of every human being? These are the really important questions.

Any man who has been a Public School boy can look back and estimate the worth, or rather the utter worthlessness, of most of what was comprised under the head of divinity and religion in his years at school. Of course he is a churchman. As a clergyman once remarked, "all the best people are." It is the only denomination favoured by the upper classes, with the exception of Roman Catholicism, which is traditional in some families. All the other sects of Noncon-

formity are for the middle and lower classes.* The Public School boy knows little or nothing about them, but he soon understands that the attitude of the Church towards them corresponds precisely to his own attitude towards the lower classes—that is to say, it is one of kindly and contemptuous patronage founded on ignorance. The Church is a nationally established institution with bishops and cathedrals. There is something expensive and ancient about it, so, as an institution, it must be the best.

The boy comes to school with vague and childish notions of theology and a parrot-like knowledge of the Catechism. The petulant interruptions of the questioner inspire him with a feeling almost of terror that his repetition of it will not run off the reel quite smoothly.

"What did your godfathers and godmothers *then* for you?" He takes a long breath. ". . . first that I should renounce the deviland-allhisworks, the pompsandvanity of this wicked world, and allthesinfulustsofthflesh." The nursery-maid may have frightened him with descriptions of the devil, but he is not yet aware that the world is very wicked. And then to think that we make our children at the age of

* "Even Dissenters have feelings of a sort. Although most of them were born in back streets—that is not their fault. They would have chosen otherwise if they could. Although every one knows that Dissent is the religion of the cad, it is the worst possible offence against good taste to say so" (*St. Matthew's Parish Magazine* [Southsea], February, 1911).

eight talk about the "lusts of the flesh," taking great care never to explain to them at the age of sixteen, when the lusts begin to attack them, what they are and what they mean.

So he goes on repeating the subtle theological intricacies in the Creed and the Ten Commandments. The last paragraphs he generally finds very sticky, because they are to him entirely incomprehensible, in spite of all explanations.

"What is the inward and spiritual grace?"

"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath we are hereby made the children of grace."

This clause of the Catechism exposes the keynote of a great deal that is wrong in the general conception of children's education. There need be no irreverence in questioning the infallibility of the doctrines propounded in the Catechism, a form of instruction drawn up and revised during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by various Anglican ecclesiastics. A thoughtful disbelief in a certain hard and uncompromising dogma can be every bit as reverent as a thoughtless belief in it. In the ecclesiastical world, however, credit is only given to credulity.

The orthodox belief is that a child is born tainted with evil instincts and inclined to sin, and it is the duty of pastors and masters to correct his nature and remove the taint by a series of religious observances. The process must be one of vigilant repression of evil and

inoculation of good. This, indeed, is the underlying principle throughout.

If this antiquated and entirely false superstition were abandoned there might be some chance of undermining the whole system, with its deadening and cramping effects. It is far more probable that every child born into the world contains within it a spirit of perfection, and retains that spirit untainted till the body dies. The spirit of perfection emanating from an unseen controlling power, and inseparably connected with it, has infinite capabilities, which it is only prevented from exercising and exhibiting by material imperfections and disadvantages due partly to physical causes, partly to heredity, and partly to environment. There can be no such thing as a spirit of evil. Evil is the result of the physical deficiencies of human nature as it is at present constituted. The good alone is inspired. The evil is the obstacle which interferes, often very seriously, with the free expression of the good. With such a belief the process of education would mean preventing at this early age the formation of any impenetrable crust of evil physical habits which might become instincts, in order to allow the free expression from within of the essential good. No operation of inoculation is needed, because the good is there in its most sublime form, waiting to find an outlet. The younger the child the less formed are the many physical disabilities that darken the light that is trying to shine through, and the better

chance there is of mitigating their intensity. These physical deficiencies, which may sometimes be very strong, cannot be entirely removed. But a careful moral training, based not on inexplicable dogmas, but on rational teaching, will prove to be the most valuable factor in correcting natural defects, and thereby assisting the development from within which is being hindered in its progress. It is said of Dr. Arnold, whose method, unfortunately, is too seldom copied, that as in intellectual so in moral matters it was to promise rather than to attainment that he looked, and it was by stimulating the good rather than by repression of evil that he acted.

Rich parents generally leave the religious education of their children, with all the rest, to tutors and governesses. They are most of them hampered themselves by doubts with regard to dogmatic Christianity, but if they think about it at all they dare not take up any uncompromising or decided attitude one way or the other, and in a half-hearted way they submit to the recognised official form of religious teaching. Creeds, collects, Catechism, and Commandments are taught as religion ; " You mustn't do this " and " Don't do that " as morals ; and charity is understood not as service and sacrifice, but as giving money to missions and contributing to the offertory.

At a Public School daily chapel, two services on Sundays, Greek Testament, and Bible questions or Scripture-teaching are the doors

through which the teachers are supposed to reach the inner spiritual nature of the hundreds of boys who pass through their hands. Greek Testament means construing in a large class a chapter of the Gospels, which has been run through with the Bible the evening before. Explanations are given of the text, but they are more often about the Greek than about the Testament. Bible questions are a series of conundrums set with a view to occupying a couple of hours of a boy's time on Sunday. Sometimes they are exceedingly ingenious, and necessitate a good deal of research in Bible dictionaries and concordances. They seldom take the form of essays, or compositions requiring thought and imagination. They are generally bald questions as to events, names, phrases, geographical and topographical details, the meaning of expressions, and the comparison of passages in Old Testament history. Boys may be found on a Sunday afternoon studying a commentary on Timothy or some voluminous concordance. Knowledge of Scripture history is looked upon with high favour. Special prizes are given for it, and the general impression prevails that a boy is morally strengthened in proportion to his aptitude for divinity. God hovers behind somewhere, a frightening, warlike figure, full of vengeance and fury, but apparently the same God who is prayed to in chapel as "the author of peace and lover of concord." In such a scheme as this the real beauties, the poetry, the transcen-

dental thought of the Bible cannot be explained or appreciated.

Morning chapel consists of part of the morning service, a psalm, a hymn (if popular, well shouted), and the lesson. It is all quite mechanical, and does not arrest the attention of the boy for an instant unless he is peculiarly devout. The Sunday service is a full-dress affair, an opportunity for displaying "Sunday bags." The sartorial side of Sunday service in the Church of England would seem almost to be a fortieth article of religion. Do people dress up out of respect for the Deity or because when they are in their Sunday best their minds are more spiritually inclined? Of the many depressing effects of any sort of British religious service the rustle of silk, the nodding of plumes, the well-creased folds, the general aroma of pomatum and camphor, is perhaps the most desolating of all. But schoolboys rather enjoy watching one another and visitors' and masters' wives coming in, and they criticise the peculiarities of costume. There is a sermon which might afford a good opportunity of instilling some sort of reality into the proceedings, but it is an opportunity not often made use of. Anything sentimental or emotional should be scrupulously avoided, but a short discourse of the simple, telling sort can make boys think in such a way that they will begin to examine the meaning and purpose of life. Attached to the older foundations there are a number of elderly divines, who cannot be

expected to perform this office and whose eccentricities remain indelibly engraved on the minds of their youthful congregation. From start to finish the whole tone and manner of these services are hopelessly perfunctory. There is no tendency to irreverence among the boys, but their reverence is senselessly conventional. They may be correctly orthodox, or some may be boldly unorthodox; but it is a question of fashion, not of thought. If daily prayers are read in the boarding-houses it is a mere matter of routine. Forms are gabbled through, which by constant repetition have become quite meaningless. This, then, is practically and officially the sum total of school "religious" education.

Does the result of such a lack of moral training show itself in the boys' characters? Decidedly it does. They are not immoral. That is far too hard a word to apply to boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen, and a word that is used too often and too lightly. It denotes a serious defect in character, of which of course there are always a few instances. But as a whole they are distinctly "unmoral," which is the inevitable outcome of such treatment. Home influence, as already suggested, could correct this, but if ever small sparks of moral self-consciousness are kindled at home, at school they are almost extinguished, and, anyhow, never fanned into flames. Many boys brought up in this way show to their life's end a strong disinclination to penetrate below the surface, an intolerance

for the abstract aspect of problems, and an engrained preference for worldly wisdom.

It is very difficult for a boy to grasp that there is the smallest connection between all this ceremonial religion, the historical, geographical, and Greek teaching, which he does not believe really matters, and his conduct, duty, and life, which are still only very hazily apprehended. When he is scolded and punished for his misdemeanours it is, as a general rule, on the principle of the repression of evil, not of liberation of good. He is told what he ought *not* to do, but it is seldom suggested to him what he *ought* to do. Rarely does he receive any word in all his schooldays, at the most susceptible time of his existence, about the significance of life, the knowledge of humanity, the true meaning of morality, the world he lives in, his duty to his fellows, and his own sense of responsibility. No setting up of an ideal, no suggestions for moral training, no guidance for conduct, no aim for growing hopes and aspirations, nothing but Jehoiachin, Dearly beloved brethren, and ὁ λόγος.

Every teacher, of course, cannot be expected to deal with these subjects successfully. Boys are suspicious of any one who is inclined to preach, or addicted to the "pi-jaw," and they are ashamed of any display of emotion. Also it is difficult in schools that are essentially anti-democratic and diligently foster class prejudice to explain fully the precepts of Christ, which are ultra-democratic—in fact, socialistic. A good

deal of garbling and slurring over of awkward points has to be done. The Christian religion has only been accepted by the rich because the divinity of Christ has been taught as an essential feature of it. Were it not for this supernatural element, the eternal truths uttered by a village carpenter would certainly not have found any favour. But the supernatural is capable of almost any explanation, and can be comfortably adapted to almost any point of view. The precepts are regarded not as a tangible and attainable ideal, but as a transcendental counsel of perfection veiled over in mysticism.

"If the Public Schools were to make an attempt to Christianise the rising generation, would the parents stand it?" asks an enlightened Public School master." * "I think not. The average parent understands by religious teaching something which will provide a sanction for the commercial spirit and the existing social order. In a vague way he wishes his boy to realise that wealth is blessed and poverty slightly discreditable, and that the British Empire is a sounder and more practical ideal than the Kingdom of Heaven. If his boy must be righteous it is desirable that his righteousness should not exceed that of the Scribes and the Pharisees; whatsoever is more than this comes of Socialism or some other evil thing. No doubt the Bible is a most unpromising book on which to build up a sound commercial education; but many

* Letter to *The Nation*, January 14, 1911.

generations of business men have learned to regard it as a talisman; so the boy must grow up with it but not of it."

If only Bible teaching could be made intelligent and discriminating, it would have its use as a foundation for religious teaching. Most boys can be reached by a simple, rational, and direct appeal. They are all beginning to grope in the great spreading darkness, and they are only too grateful for a friendly hand with a lantern. But instead of any lead or guidance, the idea is to turn out boys like those described in the Rev. C. L. Marson's admirable pamphlet: "They can tell you who Huppim and Muppim and Ard were; they know the latitude of Beersheba, Kerioth, and Bethgamul; they can tell you who slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day; they have ripe views upon the identity of Nathanael and St. Bartholomew; they can name the destructive miracles, the parables peculiar to St. Luke, and, above all, they have a masterly knowledge of St. Paul's second missionary journey. They are loaded and ballasted with chronicles of Baasha and Zimri, Methuselah and Alexander the Coppersmith. . . . Take any of these 'religiously educated' children and ask them what one must do to make life nobler and less sordid. They simply look puzzled."

No amount of theology, divinity, or dogma by itself can be made use of as a substitute for the teaching of religion. The observance of strictly orthodox practices and the ready acceptance of

all orthodox beliefs are no signs of a religious disposition; on the contrary, they very frequently go with a mechanical, unsensitive mind, whose reverence is a matter of routine and whose inspiration is nothing more than punctilious convention. There is very little connection between piety and moral rectitude.

It is good for foals to be turned out loose in a paddock, but there must be fences to the paddock to prevent them from straying into mire and bog. Morally speaking, there are no fences whatever (except school regulations, which no one is despised for disregarding). Many consequently wander very far afield. But, theologically speaking, they are tied up in stalls with their noses forced into a manger filled with stodgy, indigestible food. And yet the only complaint made by the head masters is that there is a deplorable falling off in Scripture teaching, specially in the smaller Public Schools. These are probably the very schools which are endeavouring to institute some real system of moral discipline and adequate religious training.

Such, however, is the force and purity of the foundation of good, which springs up in human nature, that in spite of this neglect most boys develop from their innermost consciousness unaided a fairly sensitive moral perception, and welcome it in others. Were they indeed born as "children of wrath," the religion that is taught them at a Public School would leave them in a

deplorable condition of positive depravity. So frail and unstable, indeed, is the structure of dogmatic teaching presented to them, and so little connection has it with the deep foundations of true morality, that it soon crumbles in after-life. And then, with no intellectual resources, no enthusiasm for the wonders of nature, and no appreciation of the great achievements of humanity, they drift into apathy, indifference, and a cold, cynical contempt for the vital supports in the guidance of their life. Without being fully aware of it they are left stranded, and the weapons that might stand them in good stead in the difficult task of utilising to the full their exceptional opportunities are blunted and rendered useless.

CHAPTER XI

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Private school—General result from Public School training —Latin — Greek — English literature — Mathematics —Modern languages—History—Number of teachers— Rigidity of system — Games — Fagging — Manners — Wasted opportunities—Boy hardly to blame.

In order to illustrate the argument more fully, the first-hand experience may be given of one who spent five years at a Public School towards the end of the nineteenth century.

"It would be incorrect to say that I learned nothing whatever at a Public School. A boy from thirteen to eighteen learns a great deal wherever he is. He is learning all the time. But the question is, What do I remember of what I was deliberately taught, and what use was the learning I received to me later? Something must have stuck for a time because there were examinations to be passed. But I take it that education means something more than this, and I am trying to think whether any taste for any particular subject was cultivated in me, and I cannot honestly say that it was.

"I distinctly recollect the day I arrived at my

private school. I was taken to the classroom, and my very first task was to translate a bit of Greek prose. I was only just eleven, and I am amazed at myself when I think now that I was capable of even attempting it, but I am more amazed still when I consider the idiotic system which allowed such a thing to be possible. However, at this preparatory school I believe I did master some elementary knowledge, and I am not conscious of having been perpetually harried by examinations. But I have no pleasant recollections of the musty, dismal school-house, which is always vividly recalled to my memory by the smell of scrubbed boards. Be it said that a number of the boys were peers' sons, a fact the head master never omitted to mention to parents, of course in a casual parenthesis.

As a result of good grounding in the required subjects, I made a pretty fair start at my Public School. But somehow after that I went through the full five years' course with only moderate success, absorbing the requisite amount of information to lift me along from class to class, with diminishing rather than increasing zeal. I was an average type, never distinguishing myself in any branch of learning, failing occasionally but not too frequently; generally about the middle of my class, lazy rather than stupid, careless rather than disobedient, slow and inattentive, but not uninterested. My studies represent themselves to me now, some years after, as colourless, monotonous, and mechanical grind.

No one subject stands out in my memory as something that roused excessive liking, or as something I was tempted to pursue in after years.

"Latin conveys to me early lessons in grammar and syntax, and the increasing difficulty and toil of Latin prose, which was always a puzzle of translation, but never became for me an interesting work of style and construction, and Latin verses, which were a perfect curse. The prose one could finish even badly, but the verses were an extra complicated sort of acrostic which sometimes would not come out. To me they were not remotely connected with poetry, and some boys who had a facility for them were by no means poetical. I used occasionally to give a couple of lines apiece to some of my good-natured and cleverer friends, and collect them at night and write them out together into one sublime poem. Cæsar in the earlier days was dreadfully dull, but easy, as there were many words one recognised at once. Of Ovid I can remember nothing, except the appearance of the book of extracts. Cicero was more difficult and I thought still duller. I wondered how he could have made such portentously long speeches. But I had no idea why he made them, or when he lived or anything about him. But that was the same with all the authors. I rather liked Horace, because he was sometimes amusing. I was puzzled at the immense amount of explanatory English that seemed to be required to translate one of his short lines. I can recollect an adven-

ture I had with the Ars Poetica. In preparing for an examination on leaving school I was not told that it was one of the obligatory subjects, and I only found out the mistake two days before the examination began. I rushed to a coach, spent most of the two days with him while he construed the Ars Poetica to me over and over again. His fee of £1 an hour was equal to fourpence a minute, and this fact got hold of my imagination and very much interfered with my powers of attention. As he slowly translated in a dull, monotonous voice, I seemed to hear the clink of the pennies falling on the table, and tried to calculate how much it came to per line. I failed in the examination, but that was not only on account of an imperfect knowledge of the Ars Poetica. My last term at school I was having far too good a time with games and amusements and gossip to bother very much about work. Besides, I had not yet the smallest notion of how to set about my work, even when I had the time. This want of method, which may have been a natural defect, I really think might quite well have been corrected.

"But to return to Latin, Virgil was difficult, and there seemed to be such a lot of it. Now and again a passage struck me as—I won't say beautiful, because I certainly recognised no beauty, but ingenious and interesting. But like so much else it appeared to be right away in the distance out of reach. I seemed to know that never would I read it with ease, and, there-

fore, never with real enjoyment. Besides, I was always thinking of the bit with all the traps that would probably be asked in the examination. I do not remember anything about Livy and Tacitus except their names, and there were other Latin authors whose names even I cannot recall.

"Greek I frankly hated. The grammar was torture; the idea of a Greek paradigm to this day reminds me of pain which was almost physical, and I do not believe that I should ever have mastered the uses of γε and ἄν. I may say that I had never learned English grammar, so for long I thought it was a peculiar characteristic of the Latin and Greek languages, which was enough to make them odious in anybody's eyes. There were extracts from Xenophon's Anabasis, which I thought inexpressibly dreary. Finger-marked and loosened pages of my Herodotus I can still see in my mind's eye, because they betrayed signs of struggle and conflict; they were disfigured with notes, scribblings, smudgings, and underlinings. How I detested it! Then tit-bits of Homer. I was on the look-out for incidents about which I had read at home in 'Stories from Homer' (not a school book), but I think I might have liked it better if the whole scheme had been more fully explained to me, and if it had not been that for a particular examination I was obliged to learn up two books of the Odyssey in a very short space of time, making a special study of catch passages 'which you are sure to be asked.' My Thucydides was bound

in scarlet, but I should be sorry to have to answer any other questions about that great author. I recollect learning some lines of Theocritus by heart. I remember them now; the jingle of them will never leave me. I don't know what they mean, and I didn't know then; nor did I know what the whole poem was about, who Theocritus was, or when he lived. Perhaps the most prickly bit of Greek I tried to grapple with was part of an oration of Demosthenes, which occupied us one whole term. It was hideously difficult, far too difficult for me to take the very smallest interest in it. It was full of legal technicalities, and the one word I can remember that always seemed to recur was 'demurrage.' I had not the vaguest notion what it was all about. I was eighteen at the time, so I suppose I ought to have understood all about 'demurrage,' and have enjoyed 'demurrage.' But, after all, I think most sensible men would agree that it was hardly a subject to make a boy of eighteen hurry to his books. A page or two of some Greek plays and a very occasional reference to Greek history were also made singularly dry under different masters.

"Not long ago I was reading Gilbert Murray's translations and his prefaces to the plays. I thought them deeply interesting and wonderfully beautiful. A few familiar names as I read filled me with a sort of nausea, as I remembered my Greek lessons at school, the construing and preparation, and translation and parsing. I

know a boy at school now who is reading these translations with great appreciation. He is being shown the idea, the thought, the plan, the origin, and taught something of the author first, and the Greek, which he is not likely to master perfectly, is secondary. 'Selected passages' from the classics were presented to me as a means of learning Greek. Incidentally, through the medium of a very elementary knowledge of the language I was supposed to be able to recognise the beauties and appreciate the significance of what I read. Surely this was the wrong way round. I must explain that my boy friend is not at one of the recognised, best, large, 'great' Public Schools, so perhaps he does not count.

"Whether the object was to teach us the Greek language or to give us a good brain exercise I do not know. Many of the masters, I think, must have despaired of the first, and therefore consoled themselves that they were doing the second. There were paradigm papers on which we wrote out the various parts of Greek verbs. The paper was shiny, and by blotting easily helped to screen my frequent ignorance of accents and breathings. The perpetual parsing of words worried us a good deal and interrupted our attempts at following the sense when we were construing. A master once, during a lesson in Homer, had perpetually stopped boys and made them parse the words. It was a passage in which a hero shot an arrow from his bow

at some enemy. 'Nor did he miss him,' explained the master. 'Nordidhemissim,' repeated the boy, and then, without a moment's pause added, 'first person singular, first aorist indicative, active, from *νορδιδημίζω*.'

"It may be said you cannot teach Greek without grounding boys in the difficulties of the grammar. I can only say that I did not learn Greek by those means, but then it may have been my laziness and stupidity, and perhaps I should not have learned it in any case. I think, as a matter of fact, the study was much too difficult for a young boy, and the result was that many more got a lifelong hatred of Greek literature than received benefit from it or appreciation of it. The boys who distinguished themselves in classics were a small minority. Even had we been more intelligently impressed with the interest and the beauties of classical authors, the language would always have been an obstacle. History, elementary science, and the elements of political economy (the very name of which was unknown to me at school) are, in my opinion, subjects which the mind of the younger boys can grasp more easily, and at the same time are studies which would be of lasting use to them.

"I came across a pile of my old school-books some time ago, and it is impossible to say with what loathing I regarded their dun-coloured covers, closely printed, finger-marked, torn, pencilled, inked pages, with occasional leaves

specially dirtied showing where the 'bit' was that had to be done. However, in all this Latin and Greek, I managed to get through, because in a class of twenty-five or thirty boys it was only necessary to note the master's method and a pretty shrewd guess could be made of when one's turn to construe would come. If I were 'put on' one day, I could measure the chances and know when I could safely shirk preparing the lesson at all. For many of the books, too, there was a handy crib which was passed round and which helped to destroy the little good which might have been derived from careful preparation with dictionary or lexicon.

"We were not taught English, so I need not dwell on that. English literature for some reason was ignored, except Milton, from which we wrote our punishment lines, and which I consequently learnt to detest. I was once given eight hundred lines for missing Sunday chapel as I had gone out to breakfast with a friend some way off. But a thousand lines was a common punishment. 'Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit' only conveys to hundreds of men to-day the desolating and cramping toil of punishment lines. Mathematics I had a taste for at first. Whether I was too slow or dense I do not know, but anyhow I soon found the lesson had got beyond me, and it became an effort and a drudgery. I took a genuine interest in elementary science and showed some aptitude for it. But, for some reason I cannot now remember, after a term

or two it suddenly left off and I never continued my studies in that direction at all. We had lessons in modern languages, but the little I know of them now was not learned at school. No Public School boy of my time who had not been abroad could speak decent French. There were special extra half-hours in which we read French and German plays and books. I liked this, having some small aptitude for foreign languages. But unfortunately they had to be fitted in between dinner and the first afternoon school, and as dinner was preceded by an hour's violent exercise at football, fives, or some other game, the physical effort of preventing eyes closing, head nodding, and even book dropping seriously impaired my powers of concentration.

"English History consisted in reading out passages and answering set questions in writing. It was rather confusing and bewildering. There seemed to be no form or order. It was like beads without a string. I got stuck at one time in the Wars of the Roses, and at another time in the Peace of Utrecht. The 'Age of Anne' was a book that haunted me for a long time. There seemed to be certain cut-and-dried periods which were marked off for different forms in the school, and you had to be pretty high up to reach the Georges. I have often wondered since why to know about William the Conqueror should be elementary, and to know about George III. should be advanced; the contrary idea would be far more rational. But History

occupied very little time because it was not wanted for the University examinations. To pass the remarkable examinations called 'responsions' no knowledge of English History is required. Geography we were not taught, or rather when I come to think of it we occasionally filled names in blank maps, but I learned geography afterwards. I cannot help thinking that geography is a very suitable subject to teach even the youngest boys. Drawing I always enjoyed, and when it took the form of sketching in the playing-fields instead of going in to morning chapel I became enthusiastic. As for music, I could play the violin when I first went to school, but it was made too difficult for me to keep up. The lesson was in play hours, so I dropped it entirely and ended by singing third-rate ballads such as 'Two little friendless children' and 'White wings they never grow weary.' The choral society, however, was well managed and well attended.

"I remember on one occasion distinguishing myself in a holiday task which was a play of Shakespeare's. The reason was that I did it at my own time, in my own way, and more especially because I enjoyed it. Even at the time it occurred to me that it was strange I could not enjoy other sorts of study, for occasionally I did catch glimpses of something that attracted me. But it was quickly obscured by a haze of technicalities, grammatical obscurities, and the disturbing spirit of rivalry and competition,

which was so much encouraged. On going into another form I frequently found I was expected to know something I had never been taught. If I had been a dead failure I should blame myself alone, though I might plead that special inadaptability ought to have been met by special methods of tuition. But I was not a failure, but a fair average Public School product. To the end I scraped through all the necessary examinations. One thing is certain, through it all my imagination and critical faculty were allowed to remain absolutely fallow.

"During the five years I was at a Public School I passed through the hands of thirty-three masters. I am not straining the point so as to include masters to whom I may have gone on some isolated occasion for one lesson. These thirty-three were class masters, or masters to whom I went for private tuition: fourteen taught classics, seven mathematics, three science, five modern languages, three music, and one drawing. Perhaps I may be allowed in parenthesis to make further confessions with regard to the number of individuals who endeavoured and were paid to instruct me.

At home	14
Private school	9
Public School	33
University	18
Abroad	9
Crammers	8
Total	91

"Either I was phenomenally dense or else I cannot help thinking there was a waste of energy and effort somewhere. But every Public School boy could, if he taxed his memory, give a similar list, some probably longer.

"Out of the thirty-three Public School masters I only got to know one at all intimately. I was singularly fortunate, as he was a man of great distinction of mind and character. The advantage I gained from this was indirect and due to his personality, rather than his powers of tuition, and it was not till afterwards that I realised what I had lost by not knowing him better. We regarded masters as beings who were there to instruct us and to inflict on us this particular form of disagreeable discipline, but not as men whose profession we admired, or whom we desired in any way to imitate. Their profession, indeed, we most of us considered rather low down in the social scale of professions. The relations between masters and boys is too delicate a matter to discuss profitably without long experience. But there can be no question that anything like a beneficial influence cannot be exercised by a man who has to deal with a large horde of boys. It is almost beyond human power to supervise and guide with discrimination so large a variety of personalities.

"On reflection it appears to me that the principal drawback in the system lay in the fact that, like indifferent doctors who diagnose a disease according to set medical formulæ and

treat it without regard for character and temperament, we were diagnosed solely on the amount of information we had absorbed, which was tested by examination, and little regard was paid to taste, to predilections, or peculiarities of disposition. We were all treated alike. The system was rigid, we were pliant and were made to adapt ourselves to it. In addition to this, I really believe that the continuous gorging of my mental digestion with dry, ill-assorted, and artificially prepared information and instruction without any thought being taken of whether it was assimilated or not, produced in me an intellectual nausea from which I have never recovered, and seriously impaired my acquisitiveness and appetite for learning. Freshness and zeal could not survive after five years of such treatment.

"The credit of the school was placed too high above the interests of the individual boys. As in scholarship more interest and trouble was devoted to boys who showed proficiency, so also in the games the boys who exhibited signs of excelling received careful attention and coaching, and the rest were left to take care of themselves. The gaining of prizes and University distinctions redounded to the credit of the institution, and so also did a good eleven or whatever number of boys it might be who represented the school in games. Although I did not excel in games myself, I did not resent the compulsion, which is often objected to. We were

certainly more interested in games than in anything else. We talked incessantly about them, and our heroes were invariably boys who were distinguished as athletes. School-work was very frequently sacrificed to games. In fact, the whole school was for us divided, classified, and clothed according to the proficiency of boys in games. A coloured cap was worth ten times more than any prize. As our book-work was so absolutely unattractive, it was not surprising that we turned most of our attention to an occupation which really interested and amused us.

"I must not forget that I learned how to cook buttered eggs, I could make excellent toast, and I could lay a fire, an accomplishment I have found exceedingly useful ever since. When I find I know how to correct a housemaid in this art, it has struck me how useful it would have been had I been in the same position with regard to carpentering, plumbing, gardening, or building. Indeed, I thought fagging unobjectionable, though I believe it would have been better if the period of being fagged had been prolonged so that no boy could escape a couple of years of it. To have fags may perhaps have made some boys domineering and autocratic, but it taught the exercise of personal responsibility and the control of others.

"As for manners, it is quite a mistake to suppose they can be taught at school. It is at home alone that the instinct of good manners can be engrained. *Manner* can be taught, and

those who send their sons to school with a view to making them gentlemen can perhaps derive some satisfaction from a superficial imitation of certain habits and mannerisms. They can learn to assume the easy assurance and *savoir-faire*, which not only act as a useful screen to prevent the exposure of ignorance, but even suggest a concealed profundity of knowledge. A boy who obeyed the conventions, scholastic, athletic, and social, had a pleasant enough time. I showed no originality, and was quite ready to conform. It is only the original boy who refuses to submit to the prevailing customs who suffers. I remember some whom I thought 'scugs' because they never would fit in with our boyish notions of what was correct. No doubt they suffered. But we thought it right that they should, and they did not receive much encouragement either from the masters.

"I must confess I greatly enjoyed the five years I spent at a Public School and was miserable when I left. The social life, the common interests, the making of friends, the old traditions, and most of all the spirit of the place, all made it exceedingly attractive. The boy mind hates change and disturbing mental stimulants. It revels in routine. A conventional boy between the ages of twelve and eighteen, if he is in pleasant surroundings, well fed, and associating with agreeable companions, is bound to be happy. One ought hardly to commend a school on this account. To say that a Public School is an

excellent institution because the boys are happy is the same sort of praise as declaring that a man is an admirable man because he is fond of his children. A great deal more is wanted, and I cannot admit that my happiness would have been interfered with if I had learned something, or been fired with some desire to learn anything. I was not 'booky,' but I was quite fond of reading, and it is impossible to believe that some of the subjects might not have been made far more appetising. I must confess, too, that had I been an orphan dependent solely on the knowledge, notions, and ideas I received at school it would have been a very bad look-out for me.

"I am quite willing to blame myself and other boys like me, and I am conscious of many opportunities that were wasted, but I cannot honestly feel that much blame ought to be cast on a boy of twelve, or even a boy of eighteen. The proportion of those who are hopelessly intractable, persistently obstinate, constitutionally inept, or impervious to any sort of influence is extremely small. But I believe the proportion of those whose individuality is deadened, whose peculiar talents are neglected, and whose special aptitudes are never discerned is very large indeed. There is in the world, we all know, a gigantic waste of human capacity. This wastage begins at school, and I believe it is a far more serious matter than most people suppose."

CHAPTER XII

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION

Commission reported in 1864—Point of view of the Commissioners—Schools originally founded for the education of the poor—Evidence before the Commission—Increase in number at schools since 1861—No real change in system—The study of classics—Grammar—Specialisation—Reluctance of school authorities to adopt reforms—The position of a critic.

THERE has been no investigation into our Public Schools since 1861. The Royal Commission that was appointed in that year and reported in 1864 was chiefly concerned with endowments, funds, revenues, administration, and management. At the same time it made a survey of studies, tuition, and expenses. But the report of a commission depends very much on the spirit in which the commissioners enter upon their task and the degree in which they can exercise sufficient authority to effect changes and reforms. It is often supposed that, a commission having reported, public opinion has been satisfied and there is no need for further action, and when there is no question of legislation the most that can be expected is that the exposure of abuses may lead to reforms. There was a Public

Schools Act of 1868, but this dealt purely with questions of administration and endowments, which were important in some cases, as, for instance, at Harrow, where the best educational developments are said to date from that time. But if any action was taken with a view to making systematic educational changes, it was in most other cases the minimum, which was just sufficient not to show complete disregard of the findings of the Commission, but insufficient to alter materially a system that has grown up for centuries undisturbed. Moreover, the Commissioners were not prepared to question the very existence of Public Schools, or to find any fault with this method of exclusive education for gentlemen. They were merely intent on improving the management and the course of training in institutions which they had no doubt might be made to serve their purpose effectively if they were kept up to the mark.

The Commissioners described them as "schools for boys whose parents are in sufficiently easy circumstances to afford them a gentleman's education," and "that class of school to which most Englishmen of the higher class either send their sons or wish to send them." "These schools," they admitted, "have been the chief nurseries of our statesmen: in them and in schools modelled after them men of all the various classes that make up English society, destined for every profession and career, have been brought up on a footing of social equality, and have contracted

the most enduring friendships and some of the ruling habits of their lives, and they have had the largest share perhaps in moulding the character of an English gentleman." We must duly note the phrase, "all the various classes that make up English society." It sounds very comprehensive, but it practically means only those who can afford to pay a minimum of £150 per annum for the education of their sons. Had the report appeared in the second decade of the twentieth century some doubt might have been expressed as to whether these institutions were producing "the gentleman" quite so successfully as they used to.

The great Public Schools have indeed become very rich. The consequence of this is that they have lost sight of the main object for which they were originally founded—namely, to educate the poor. They are now using their money to attract the rich. The endowments of all secondary schools in Scotland are not so great as the endowment of Eton alone. Lands were granted to the college by the founder, Henry VI., for the maintenance of poor scholars. But the scholars on the foundation, who in numbers constitute less than a tenth of the whole school, cannot be described by any means as "poor." Harrow School was also founded for poor boys. On the tomb of John Lyon, the founder, may be read: "Heare lyeth buryed the bodye of John Lyon, etc., who hath founded a free Grammar School in this Parish to have continuance for

ever and for maintenance thereof and for relief of the Poore and of some poore scholars in the Universities." The boys were to be chosen for "towardness, poverty, and painfulness." The land he bought in Marylebone increased in value beyond expectation, but it was not the poor of Harrow who benefited by this. In 1809 they made an attempt to assert their rights, and complained that the elections were carried out quite unlawfully. One or two fathers plucked up courage to send a child to the school, but the life of the said child was made unbearable by the behaviour of the high-spirited young gentlemen. At last Dr. Vaughan helped them to build a school of a humbler order by giving back a sum of money from the rapidly growing foundation treasury. "Just so a child from whom a shilling was stolen might be quieted by having a penny slipped into his hand." In the same way the endowments of the other Public Schools have enormously increased. St. Paul's, for instance, which was founded mainly for poor scholars, has lands worth once £120, but now worth £20,000 a year. Charterhouse was founded by Sutton for the maintenance of thirty-five poor children and scholars. The governors resolved at their first meeting that "no children shall be placed here whose parents have any estate in land to leave unto them, but only the children of poor men who want means to bring them up." *

* See note, p. 90, in "The Child and the State," by Margaret McMillan.

With the exception of St. Paul's, these schools, primarily endowed for the education of the poor, have in their prosperity drifted to the very opposite extreme, and are specially distinguished to-day as institutions to which only the very well-to-do can send their sons.

The Commissioners—having probably been Public School boys themselves—accepted the Public School system and the idea of a separate education for gentlemen, and there is not a word in their report to cast any doubt on the desirability of these institutions, to suggest fundamental change, or to propose a return to the original intentions of the founders. The larger point, therefore, is hardly touched, but the question of the efficiency of the schools as educational instruments is fully gone into.

Mr. Gladstone wrote to one of the Commissioners: "The amount of work which we get out of the boys at our Public Schools—speaking of the mass of them—is scandalously small."

The Commissioners quote tutor after tutor of Universities who came forward to say that the men coming from these schools were mostly men of excellent principles and manners, but many they call "indolent," "unawakened," "inaccurate," "men of idle habits and empty, uncultivated minds." It was, indeed, obvious enough by the evidence that most of the schools were in a state of stagnation and neglect. But it is hardly surprising that this should have been the

case, considering that the period of educational revival had not dawned. And it would be unreasonable to expect in the sixties that these very conservative establishments had hit on new methods or conceived original ideas. We hear, therefore, without surprise that mathematics were hardly taught, French in some cases not at all, music not at all, and that the proportion of masters to boys was one to forty. One head master declared fifty ought to be managed in one class, and another head master said there was no time to teach foreign languages.

"The whole Press of the United Kingdom, whether friendly or unfriendly, whether religious, political, educational, or scientific, had with appalling unanimity summed up the general result of the Report of the Commissioners in the one ugly word *failure*." *

To compare the state of affairs in the sixties with fifty years previously is a very different thing from comparing it with fifty years subsequently. The spread of education has entirely altered our views of what should be taught, how it should be taught, and the effect it has on the learner. It would be more correct to say that we now have views where formerly we had none. Yet Dr. Arnold did more for the improvement of the Public School system before

* The Rev. F. W. Farrar on "Defects in Public School Education." "In one word we may say the Commissioners find Public School Education to be a failure" (*The Times*, March 28, 1864).

the Royal Commission sat than has been done since. In Rugby, where he went in 1828, he found a school without marked character and unencumbered by ancient traditions. It was therefore a favourable field for a reformer to work in. While maintaining the pre-eminence of the classics as the best vehicle for the study of languages, he was the first to add mathematics, modern history, and modern languages. Rugby also has been specially fortunate since then in its remarkable succession of distinguished and enterprising head masters.

But have Public Schools as a whole changed very much since the sixties except to increase in size in direct opposition to the advice of the Commissioners? "It seems clear," they say, "that the numbers of a Public School should not exceed what a single Head can himself exercise some actual personal influence upon." And again on the subject of increase: "We cannot think that its indefinite advance is desirable."

The table on the page opposite shows the great increase in numbers in five of the largest schools, and though classes have decreased in size they are still absolutely unwieldy.

The Public School system is more popular than ever. No less than 113 schools of this kind are entered in the "Public Schools' Year Book," and of these forty-six were founded during the nineteenth century.

But there is no really noteworthy change in

most of these schools. Speaking of the early eighties an ex-Public School boy says: "Many boys learnt very little indeed, contriving to go through the school with a really surprising lack of mental effort. . . . In many respects the school-work was idiotically useless and bad, a great part of it having seemingly been devised to entail a maximum of drudgery with a

		Number of Boys.	Number of Masters.	Approximate Size of Class.*
Eton	1861	806	32	40
	1911	1,000	66	25
Harrow ...	1861	481	22	35
	1911	600	46	30
Winchester ...	1861	200	12	40
	1911	400	34	25
Rugby... ...	1861	463	19	40
	1911	570	39	25
Charterhouse ...	1861	116	9	20
	1911	560	34	30

minimum of useful information."† The experiences of a boy at a later period are given in Chapter XI. And more recently still a very similar tale could be told, though perhaps more pressure is brought to bear to prepare boys for examination, and in some of the schools subjects

* There are smaller classes for special subjects, and in some cases the classes are larger than the figure given.

† "Floreat Etona," by Ralph Nevill.

are taught which were not included twenty or thirty years ago.

But it is not adding a half-hour here or an extra lesson there, stopping Greek in the lower forms, giving an hour or so to English literature, or altering the curriculum in the Upper School that changes a system. The aristocratic spirit, the exclusive tradition, the conservative intention is precisely the same, and there is as yet no great desire expressed to alter it. An actual change of system has, however, been inaugurated in certain small Public Schools that have been founded quite recently. Not being fettered by any hide-bound traditions, they are attempting to correct some of the worst features in the old Public School course, and their experiments are proving of great service.

The various advantages of classical and non-classical education come in for a good deal of discussion in the course of the evidence taken by the Commissioners. They reported: "We are of opinion that the classical languages and literature should continue to hold as they do now the principal place in Public School education." Although the relative claims of the two systems had not reached the acutely controversial stage they have to-day, there have for long been exponents of both sides of the question.

Eachard, in his "Contempt of Clergy," in 1672, expresses himself very warmly on the subject. He complains of boys being kept "in pure slavery to a few Latin and Greek words."

He suggests "the reading of some innocent English authors, where they need not go every line so unwillingly to a tormenting dictionary, and whereby they might come in a short time to apprehend common sense and to begin to judge what is true. . . ." "You know very well, Sir, that Lads in the general have but a kind of ugly and odd conception of Learning and look upon it as such a starving thing and unnecessary perfection (especially as it is usually dispens'd out unto them) that ninepins and span counter are judged much more heavenly Employments, and therefore what pleasure do we think can such a one take in being bound to get against breakfast two or three hundred Rumblers out of Homer, in commendation of Achilles's Toe or the Grecian's Boots?"

But it is not the subject of study that is at fault. Every one would admit that in the interests of the highest form of culture a familiarity with the literature of the ancient world is indispensable. The question is whether it should be the first study for boys at the age of ten or even earlier; and secondly, if it is undertaken, whether the method of writing Latin in verse* and pumping Greek accidence into unwilling minds is the best method to adopt.

* "If anything in the whole world of the unreasonable proceedings of reasonable beings be artificial . . . it is the artificial forcing of Latin verses from crude English boys who do not yet know what verse means in their own mother tongue, who perhaps from peculiarities of mental constitution never can know what verse means in any

It seems that Public Schools have at last decided to mitigate the stringency of their rules with regard to Greek, and intend to dispense with it as an obligatory subject in their entrance examinations. The chief schools have lately issued notices to this effect with a view to discouraging, as far as possible, the premature study of Greek in preparatory schools, and in some schools classical studies are not insisted on even in the upper forms. This is all to the good.

But it is now fifty years since Dr. Carpenter, of Eton, very wisely expressed his opinion on this subject in his evidence before the Commission: "I should prefer to see the faculties which are concerned in the cultivation of Physical Science trained at the earlier period (before twelve), because I believe that is the natural period at which the observing faculties and the elementary processes of reasoning may be best cultivated and the period at which the mind is not prepared for the more advanced culture of language." After all, grammar, more especially the grammar of a dead language, is an abstraction which is extremely difficult to grasp.* For example, the accusative case,

language ever spoken by articulate speaking men" (Professor Blackie on the Conversational Element in the Study of Language).

* "I ask you whether this 'land of just and old renown' has not a right to expect from her institutions a culture which shall embrace something more than declension and conjugation" (Professor Tyndall in "Modern Culture").

the aorist tense, the subjunctive mood, the passive voice, the declension of a noun, the governance of a preposition, gerundive attractions, suboblique clauses, and semi-deponents are subtleties of language which can only be taught by rote and rule. Their value as essentials in the knowledge of language cannot appeal to the child-mind. Yet, as Milton said in his letter on Education, children are made to "stick unreasonably in these grammatick flats and shallows." Whereas the law of gravity, the action of fire, or the composition of air and water present themselves as concrete facts, which immediately interest an observant, youthful intelligence and rouse its reasoning faculties. In the former case the elements are at first meaningless and dull, because they are only the preparation for a long and arduous study, which may never be sufficiently prolonged to reach its full utility as a vehicle of interpretation. In the latter, the elements are steps. The whole flight may be a long one, but each step reached is so much positive knowledge gained.*

The controversy now is not between those

* "We think it established that the study of natural science develops better than any other studies the observing faculties; disciplines the intellect by teaching induction as well as deduction; supplies a useful balance to the studies of language and mathematics and provides much instruction of great value for the occupation of after-life" (Report of Lord Taunton's Commission in 1864 to inquire into the Management of Endowed Schools).

who want a purely classical course and those who advocate an exclusively scientific course. But on the one side there is a fear that the absence of compulsion may lead to the practical elimination of the Humanities from any educational course, and on the other side a conviction that more time should be allowed for scientific and modern studies as the best training for the mind.

Without further enlarging on a question which is still more or less under dispute, and about which expert educationalists differ, one result of modern classical teaching may be clearly noticed. The gentleman of to-day is undoubtedly less of a scholar than he was in the mid-nineteenth century, the late eighteenth century, and at certain periods previous to that. This may be because classics are not so well taught, or it may be that other subjects have come so much to the front that classics are gradually getting crowded out and relegated to a less important place. The authorities, reluctant to abandon the classical tradition altogether, and yet uncertain how to cope with the modern demand for knowledge on other subjects, try to combine the new with the old, and some therefore find difficulty in giving satisfactory instruction in either.

It is becoming clear that professional specialisation, which is being pushed perhaps a great deal too far, is demanding a narrow but high level of knowledge in one direction. The Army class, which was the first attempt at

specialisation in Public Schools, is being followed by other subdivisions of particular studies for certain professions. Such a breaking up of a uniform system requires careful control and administration, and if the authorities wish still to attract all boys, whatever be their future, to the ennobling and more enlightening study of classical and literary culture, they must at once proceed to make this branch of learning really attractive and alluring. They must endeavour to show that beauty and style, the history of human thought, and the development of human genius are valuable assets of general cultivation, and that general cultivation is indispensable as a substratum in even the most highly specialised forms of education. In fact, the specialist frequently fails from having built up the hard and methodical fabric of his knowledge without any regard for the finer and more subtle strains of culture.

But this would require on the part of the Public School authorities a point of view with regard to education in general which, unfortunately, they do not seem to possess. Their attitude would have to be, "Show us the evil and we will try to cure it," which at present it is very far from being. Many of them regard the school curriculum as laid down by an inflexible tradition, and, with few exceptions, they are only willing very occasionally, grudgingly, and reluctantly to make concessions to modern requirements. Whereas in reality it may be necessary

in each succeeding generation to revise and reconstruct, from top to bottom, the system of training, in order that it may be kept in close contact and sympathetic touch with the rapid changes in social life and national development.

It is not too much to ask that there should be a more concerted attempt, by means of sympathetic instruction to small numbers rather than dreary lessons in large classes, to show boys how they fit into the complex puzzle of civilisation and to prepare them to play the part of men. Huxley's simile of the game of chess is an admirable statement of the case, for it refers not only to the utility of scientific education, but to the necessity for children being taught the rules of the game of life.

"Suppose," he observes, "that it was perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, some day or other, depend on a game of chess. Should we not all think it our duty to teach our children the principles of the game? Yet," he continues, "it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and more or less of those who are dependent upon us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe,

the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But, alas! we know to our cost he never overlooks a mistake or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well the highest stakes are paid with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays badly is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse. My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel, who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life."

The critic of our Public Schools, if he has been a Public School boy himself, is accused of disloyalty for turning against his own class and against an institution to which, anyhow, he owes his early training, whatever he may have come to think of it later. But it is possible that some believe they observe faults which gravely affect the credit and efficiency of these schools, but which are at the same time remediable. They desire to have them corrected, and also to see removed the grounds for the condemnation, disparagement, and contempt which are being levelled against the system as it now exists. Is there any disloyalty in this? May such a critic

not prefer to imagine that with wonderful advantages, local, personal, and financial, these schools might be commended by people in the future as affording facilities for the finest and most enlightening education that could be found anywhere? Can he, then, be justly condemned for refusing to be infected by the general blindness and self-complacency, and for preferring to face the facts and expose the errors and abuses at all costs?

The next Royal Commission on Public Schools should be allowed by their terms of reference to consider the efficacy and expediency of a system of privately endowed autonomous establishments which exist exclusively for the education of the children of wealthy parents.

CHAPTER XIII

UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONS

Erudition — Enlightenment — Scholarship — The boy on leaving school—The crammer—The University contrasted with the Public School—Examinations, scholarships, and degrees—The roll of fame of schools and colleges—Athletics—The professions for gentlemen—Political life—The gentleman's inadequate equipment —Unlimited leisure unmanageable.

A CERTAIN amount of mental discipline and the correction of inclinations, and also disinclinations, must of course be insisted upon, specially in the earlier stages of a boy's training. But the first phase of imparting rudimentary knowledge and the later phase of cultivating scholarship ought to be undertaken with a view to the main essential, which is the full development of character and individual expression. Scholarship is too often considered an end in itself. Boys who show any exceptional proficiency are encouraged to work to gain scholarships and prizes more with a view to gaining credit for the institution to which they belong than doing themselves any good. Very little comes of mere erudition. It is not the prizemen or the double

firsts who make *ipso facto* the best citizens. If questioned in after-life they will often confess it has been a handicap to them rather than an advantage. Unfortunately they are the men who are often selected to be schoolmasters. They have been taught to perfect a talent which is like any other talent and not superior to other talents.

The learned have always been able to impress and even impose on the unlearned from the earliest times, when their knowledge only consisted of astrology, alchemy, and magic; and the more abstruse their learning is the more will it retain the lingering traces of the occult in the eyes of the ignorant. If, however, scholarship is not pushed too far and the young brain is not driven to strain itself by mental gymnastics, but is taught to treat knowledge as the pathway to general enlightenment, it is a very different matter. Enlightenment, which should be the object of all mental education, means a broad appreciation of values, a sense of proportion and a well-balanced power of criticism. To make a very rough division, the human brain may be said to show a tendency in one of two directions—to specialise or to generalise. Those whose tendency is to specialise must be taught not to abandon themselves entirely to their own particular specialisation, otherwise their judgment and opinion will become warped and their horizon narrowed, but to allow themselves a general survey which will create in them a truer sense of proportion and give them a

wider vision. We may leave out of account the rare genius who must be allowed to absorb himself in whatever direction he chooses. In our Public Schools there are very few who acquire any aptitude for specialisation, and no part of the training is adapted to reveal or encourage any such tendency. For those who are inclined to generalisation enlightenment comes by thoroughness and careful grounding in a few subjects, by avoiding diffuse teaching, which can only result in superficial knowledge, and by cultivating the faculties of observation and appreciation. Literature is an essential, and the arts can no longer be regarded as genteel pastimes, but as inalienable elements in general cultivation. These are entirely neglected in the gentleman's education. If he shows any taste for them he develops it in spite of the inclement atmosphere of school life. The generalisation which is encouraged is a generalisation without method or object—a thin coating applied by some sanctioned prescription.

The pathway of education, in fact, should broaden from rudimentary groundwork taught with a view to scholarship. From scholarship regarded as a means and not an end towards enlightenment, enlightenment being in its turn a means of endowing boys with the qualities best suited for the true and free expression of individuality and the fortification of their moral consciousness. As it is, the acquisition of all knowledge, whether elementary or advanced, is

bestowed and regulated with a view to passing examinations, and with this restricted and narrow aim the process is cramping and the results unsatisfactory. "It would be almost impossible," says the writer in "Our Public Schools," "for an average German or an average French boy to know so little as the average English boy who has received a Public School education."

With the last examination education stops. When the young man is landed in his profession, if he follows one, or when he goes down from the University he is by way of being a finished product. As a matter of fact maturity of mind is not reached till between thirty and forty, and even then a man should be able to display a capacity to learn for the remainder of his life. But it is between thirty and forty that a young man is to show how his training has served him and whether he is fitted to cope, not only with the business of his profession, but with the business of life. Having reached self-realisation, he has still got the stupendous task of attaining self-mastery and self-control. A man's profession is important; the preparation for it may be technical or general, and his success may be due to special aptitude or good fortune. But a man's life outside his profession—a man's management of himself, a man's dealings with his fellow-men and with the world around him —is infinitely more important, and it is just this that is so largely neglected and left to chance. When a man's profession is going to absorb the

greater part of his life, like the trade of an artisan, the consequences of this neglect may not be so serious. But when, as is the case with the class in question, a full professional life is the rare exception and more or less leisure is the rule, his ignorance of facts and guiding principles—his indifference to questions of vital importance, and his blindness to any interpretation of the meaning of life—is a very serious matter.

A number of Public School boys pass from school to a crammer. The existence of crammers is the most complete exposure of the irrational and utterly defective nature of the gentleman's system of education. Crammers are quite honest. They take the system as they find it. "The object is to pass examinations. Very well," they say, "we won't have rifle-ranges, swimming-baths, chapels and playing-fields, but a few dark, unattractive, bare rooms in London. The boys who come to us will have no distractions and will want to leave us as soon as possible. We will do what your schools are attempting to do, but too often failing because they try and pretend they are doing something else. We will fill up the boys' heads to the brim with the proper mash for examinations. We will make a speciality of analysing examination papers and learning how to dodge the examiners. We will prepare lists of technical words, catch phrases, *memoria technica,* useful tricks, and in a few months the boys, holding as much as they can

carry in their minds for the moment, will be sent up for their particular examinations. We do not pretend that what is pumped into them like this will soak in, be fruitful, or even be remembered. But your examinations do not require the assimilation of real knowledge. If they did we should entirely fail by our method. What you require is the storing up for the critical moment, and only for that moment, of information and the polishing up for momentary display of aptitude and cleverness. We can do that by charging and burnishing up to the very last moment. You may abuse our establishments, but parents as a matter of fact are very grateful for our existence because we succeed."

And succeed they do. A large number of candidates for the Army and all branches of Civil Service pass through their hands and undergo this amazing operation of temporary cerebral inflation. The very fact that the crammers' method succeeds is in itself the most absolute condemnation of the examination system that could be found. Boys from Public Schools cannot even make sure of passing the entrance examinations for the University. They frequently have to spend an intermediate interval with a private tutor or a crammer.

The Public Schools, as has been already noted, set the standard for the private schools. But it would not be quite as correct to say that the Universities set the standard for the Public Schools. It is true they have certain examina-

tions that have to be prepared for and passed. Although some of the Public Schools have of late shown a more advanced view with regard to compulsory Greek than the Universities, apart from this detail the general influence and social tradition of the Public Schools are so strong, the method is so rigid, and the atmosphere so pronounced that the Universities are to a very large extent forced to adopt a curriculum which will be a suitable continuation of the Public School career. Five years is the usual duration of Public School life, and three years of shorter terms the duration of the University course. Moreover, during the school age the material is more mouldable and adaptable than later. It remains for the Universities to put the last few touches and lines to the already moulded and hardening clay. The harm that is done cannot be effaced. The two older Universities are also class institutions, but they are the target of much public criticism, and the system is not so rigid and the hope of reform exists, whereas in the case of Public Schools there is neither hope of reform nor organised opinion.

At a University the gentleman's son cannot be so strictly guarded against contaminating intercourse with the professional classes. By going to certain selected colleges, or more correctly speaking by forming sets or cliques within those colleges, Public School boys manage to make their University life a simple continuation of school life with the same company, the

same pursuits, the same disregard of all that lies outside their own particular sphere, and the same blindness to the vital obligations of citizenship.

The Public School set with a few additions associate together. They have their clubs, they are at liberty to begin spending their money more freely, and, in the sporting and athletic section of undergraduates, they become leaders. But there are other colleges, other sets, and a broader and freer life at hand. Opportunities do exist, though they are too often disregarded. Unique opportunities they are indeed in such inspiring surroundings, where the wonderful store of ages of culture and learning should be placed at the disposal of the nation. Here, if anywhere, there should be every chance of broadening out the boyish mind, and of giving it impetus to acquire a desire for knowledge and a method of obtaining it which shall depend on self-reliance and personal initiative, and not on the pressure of outside forces. But most of the boys who come up to the Universities from Public Schools just lack the power of initiative and the appetite of knowledge which might induce them now that they are no longer in leading-strings to pursue their studies with intelligence and zeal. Intellectually it must be confessed the average undergraduate compares very unfavourably with the student at any great Continental University.

We are not here concerned with University reform, with the waste of endowments and want

of proper management, nor can we touch on the failure of the Universities, with all their riches and collected talent, to serve a wider public and reach the poorer classes. The very presence of a number of young men who are not there for the purposes of study makes the problem of reform at Oxford and Cambridge all the more difficult. But we want to consider what the Universities do for the richer gentlemen's sons. Unfortunately it cannot be denied that although there is less restriction and more opportunities for expansion, the general effect of the University course is rather to confirm than correct Public School notions in Public School boys.

The same ideals are set. The class and pass of examination. The strange mania for establishing who can do best in examinations for scholarships, degrees, exhibitions, and prizes. This competition is considered the only method of keeping young men up to the mark, specially when the compulsion of school life has been removed. There are various ways in which intellectual competition might be beneficial, but this particular form of competition entails to a large extent the storing up of examination tricks. Freeman declared that "the spectre of an examination deadened everything." It may be said that the examination for an honour degree is so comprehensive and requires such wide reading that no superficial cramming will produce success. This is perhaps true, but when all is said and done, have those whose names have figured in the first class

of the honours list done on the average any more in the way of achievements or service than any one else? Does the label mean anything else but pure unleavened mental proficiency? And again we may ask is not this single intellectual talent spoiled by being specialised and by not having the accompaniment and balance of the proper development of other capacities? A man may be encouraged to exercise the muscles of his right arm till it attains a degree of incredible strength, but that strength, though remarkable in itself, is rendered weakness if his left arm, his legs, and the rest of his body are not exercised to support it. It was Goethe who said that much use of the microscope impairs the normal use of the eye.

The difference between our Universities and foreign Universities—take a German University, for instance—is, in the opinion of those who know both courses, that in the one at home you are made to cultivate your memory; in the other, abroad, you are made to use your mind.

Both in school and University success from the worldly point of view, the attainment of high posts, titles, and dignities is regarded as a desirable and admirable aim. The tangible result attracts; it reflects glory on the institution and the teacher. Certain colleges deliberately encourage "pot hunting" and set up that sort of success as an ideal.

In the aristocratic class it has hitherto been

comparatively easy to gain worldly success from the fact of its members being already at the top of the social ladder. Therefore the schools and colleges can become eloquent about the dukes and peers and generals and viceroys and cabinet ministers and bishops who have come under their wing. Eton, Winchester, Harrow, and the others can point to their list of prime ministers, field-marshals and pro-consuls. But how few of the aristocratic genus have emerged from the hot-house atmosphere of a large Public School to a great position in the higher sphere of the creative arts. Byron and Shelley can be quoted as products of Harrow and Eton (Gray was also an Etonian, but of humble origin). Shelley was by no means a success as a schoolboy, and Eton seems to feel that she can hardly claim credit for his wonderful genius. "Tamed by affection," said his mother, "but unconquered by blows, what chance was there that Shelley should be happy at a Public School?" Byron was less unconventional, more successful as a boy, and was consequently very fond of his school. But it was of him that Shelley said "the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out." No doubt other instances might be found, but they are few and far between.

School and college authorities like pointing proudly to their roll of fame, because they are under the delusion, which after all they share with most people, that those whose names are most prominently to the front are doing the most

for their country, and must be credited with the greatest achievements. The standard of popular, or what might be more correctly described as Press, opinion is readily accepted. Worldly success in reality is a matter of very minor importance. The work of education should be more concerned with setting up a ladder on which the lamest may climb, special attention being given to the apparently inefficient. To become celebrated is not a very high ideal for our most prominent educationalists to set before the youths committed to their charge. Probably if it could be gauged the best work in the world is being done by the obscure and unknown individuals whose names never have and never will appear in the headlines of the halfpenny Press. The importance of the so-called average man cannot be overestimated. But with dons he counts for very little.

Athletics at the Universities is a more serious business than at schools, but the compulsory element is absent, which allows greater freedom to the undergraduate who has no taste in that direction. Publicity and advertisement, on the other hand, are greater, because the youths are now full-grown, and their athletic accomplishments have to be taken more seriously. Many a young fellow is encouraged to devote a quite disproportionate amount of his life to athletic pursuits.

On the whole, however, so far as the upper classes are concerned the University influence

helps to break down some of the ultra-narrow prejudices and biased views that have been inculcated by Public Schools. Boys who are left to the tender mercy of crammers, who are sent abroad to live with foreign families, or who are kept under the personal supervision of a private tutor, lose greatly from being withdrawn from the influences of healthy association with their fellows. No boy can avoid at a University meeting a number of new types, unless he deliberately cuts himself off from intercourse with any one but his old school friends. He can study these types and strike up a friendship with young men who are quite differently situated in the social world from himself, some, perhaps, who have not seen the inside of a Public School. This in itself is a most valuable form of education. It is not facts and accomplishments that go chiefly to compose the essentials of life, but tendencies and personalities. To realise the different atmospheres, the varying circumstances in which men live, and to note the contradictions and the shortcomings, combined with the boundless potentialities of human character, is a study well worth pursuing at a time when a boy has both time and capacity to reflect. At the school his day is marked out for him, and every hour is filled. The thoughtless optimism of early youth needs no time for reflection. But later, with faculties more developed and a free choice as to the disposal of his time, problems present themselves and invite solution. It is then that character

begins to assert itself, and the personal magnetism and influence of sympathetic friends can accomplish so much.

If both in schools and University more blame has been cast on educational authorities, masters, and teachers than on the boys, some of whom may, perhaps, appear incorrigibly lazy, indolent, or unresponsive, it is because the boys' minds and souls are composed of a quite incomprehensible and elusive material, which is in process of formation. When fully formed we fail to comprehend its potentiality even in ourselves, but while it is budding it is still more inscrutable, whereas the action of the masters represents simply a method which has been approved, a way of setting to work, a plan which is explicable, fallible, and alterable.

The boy has now emerged. He will have passed through the hands of not far from a hundred governesses, tutors, teachers, lecturers, &c., of various kinds, and from the age of ten to twenty-one close on £3,000 will have been spent on his education. Is it hypercritical to say that this is an appalling waste of money and effort for such a poor result? If he turns out badly the parent's regret only takes this form: "I sent him to Eton and Cambridge, I ought to have sent him to Winchester and Oxford."

He passes into one of the gentleman's professions, which must if possible be a pecuniary employment, having no taint of industrialism about it. However well or ill he may perform his

professional duties, he finds it difficult to conceal under his assurance and easy assumption of a position of domination a profound ignorance of the art of living, and an absence of resource outside the limited sphere of the functions assigned to him. His natural qualities, maybe his persistent energy and his enterprising nature, will perhaps lead him to success, but his training is to the end a handicap. He knows well enough *l'art de vivre*—how to get on, and have a good time—but he has not learnt *l'art de la vie*. "He goes out into the world and helps to build up the Empire, doing things so well that it seems a thousand pities that he was not trained to do them better, and to face the problems of race, creed, and government in distant corners of the Empire with a more instructed mind." *

The Army, where officers are allowed a considerable amount of leisure, is on its social side very much like a further continuation of Public School life for grown-up men. But even for this the Public School training does not suffice. Speaking of Public School candidates for the Army, a writer declared about ten years ago that their training was "by pretty general consent the worst in the world. We supply the military colleges with youths whose whole work often for four or five years past has been calculated to blunt their powers of observation, to discourage them from pressing observed facts to

* T. L. Papillon in "Public Schools from Within."

their true conclusions, and to give them a livelong distaste for books or bookwork of any kind." *

After going through a technical course the gentleman finds himself accepted as an officer, but he feels like an overgrown schoolboy with few inward resources, without special interests, and with very meagre intellectual appreciations. His energies therefore soon become centred in an incessant round of sporting occupations and engagements. His class consciousness is useful if not essential to him, because in any army not based on a conscript system the division between officers and men must be very sharp. Army officers throughout their lives are apt to regard the whole constitution of society in the light of "officers and men."

In the Church, in addition to the hampering and deadening traditions which he finds there, he brings with him a lack of perception and ignorance of social problems, and just that note of class consciousness which makes many of the clergy a living contradiction of the most cardinal Christian doctrine. But the fact that a clergyman has been a Public School boy is greatly in his favour, because the rich patrons know that he will be unlikely to disturb their own notions or make uncomfortable suggestions about their altering their habits and ways of living. The present Bishop of London, however, has frankly acknowledged the drawback of this state of things. "We

* G. G. Coulton, "Public Schools and Public Needs."

clergy are largely drawn from one class . . . we are apt to like the poor so long as they keep in their proper place. We read our class newspapers, and hear our class conversations over the tea-table or after dinner, and in all we do and say class feeling insensibly makes itself felt. We freely admit and deplore the great obstacle which the 'caste' system presents in India to the progress of the Gospel; but are we equally sensible to the subtle caste feeling which exists as an intangible fence between us and the toiling millions of our people?"

Among other professions, banking and financial employments carry with them the suggestion of eventual fortune and large ownership, and therefore attract many leisured gentlemen. So long as it is lucrative, any profession is regarded with favour. What a man is making is of infinitely greater importance than what a man is doing.

As a governor, ambassador, or administrator the gentleman may do well up to a point; his social gifts may be remarkable, but too often his inadequate knowledge penalises him and just prevents genuine ability from piercing through.

In the Civil Service it is certainly not the Public School boy who carries all before him in an examination by open competition. The following table shows the small proportion contributed by Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, Charterhouse, Westminster, and Shrewsbury to

the Home Civil, the Indian Civil, and Eastern Cadets.

Year.	Number of Successful Candidates from the Seven Largest Public Schools.	Total Number of Successful Candidates.
1906	16	97
1907	18	92
1908	13	82
1909	17	89
1910	17	113

There are still a few back-doors through which by nomination or selection gentlemen can find an easier way into some professions. But these are relics of a discarded system of jobbery and patronage, and are not likely to survive very long. Under modern conditions it is perilous to reserve any profession exclusively for "gentlemen."

In condemning examinations it is not intended to suggest that entrance to the various professions can be effected in any other way than by some kind of examination. But such examination ought not to be solely a hard-and-fast mental test. It might be broadened so as to prevent the success of the specially crammed boy by taking some account of testimonials and reports of the candidate's previous school career. Such reports might be drawn up in detail and registered and preserved, so that on application to school and

college authorities a more or less complete record of the candidate's career might be at the disposal of any board of examiners. Undoubtedly it is difficult, if not impossible, to make sure of passing the best competitors. But a great deal more might be done by way of instituting a fairer and less capricious test.

Public and political life, which can be entered without examination, will continue to tempt the ambition of the leisured gentleman. In this sphere he can be a valuable asset, always provided he retains the essential gentleman-like qualities. There is one characteristic which may often distinguish him and gain for him public confidence and respect. It is that he can be, and sometimes has been, wholly disinterested. He ought to be incapable of unscrupulousness of language or of taking doubtful advantages to which the demagogue may stoop. When, however, researches are made by the historian of the future into the political controversies of the last few years, nothing will be more noticeable than the manner in which many of the aristocracy of to-day have entirely failed to preserve a high or even a moderate tone in this respect. How many speeches could be unearthed displaying not the force and vehemence of strong convictions but the petulant and ill-mannered vituperation of uninformed minds!

Disinterestedness cannot exist where ambition is personal and selfish, where there is a love of power, a desire to dominate in order to reap

material benefits for one class, or a rooted antagonism against the legitimate aspiration of the undistinguished masses. In the form of aristocratic detachment also it may border very near on indifference. But the quality of having no axe to grind and caring nothing for the glories of advertisement is one that will always be widely appreciated.

In public life more than in any other field disinterested service is of inestimable worth. The more is the pity, therefore, that many a Public School boy has found his ignorance of the fundamental principles of the great and vital questions of national concern, and of the details of the most familiar operations of social economy, a most serious, if not a fatal, impediment in his career. His very casual acquaintance with classics, his imperfect knowledge of one or two modern languages, his confused recollections of snippets of Greek, Roman, and English history, shreds of elementary science, and a few rules of mathematics form a deplorably weak equipment.

Education is certainly no longer the mark of an aristocrat as it used formerly to be. On the contrary, he appears sometimes to be anxious to show he is not well educated. Intellectuality is considered rather middle-class. He will deliberately cultivate a slipshod way of speaking English with a slight Cockney accent to convince you that anyhow he is not tarred with that brush. But should he desire to supply the deficiencies of his early training, he will find

it most difficult ever to make up the lost ground. As Mr. Holmes observes, "In the great Public Schools, where veneers of information are being laid on the surface of the boy's mind with a view to his passing some impending examination, the greater the number of veneers the more certain they all are to split and waste and perish."

In the professions where he has to compete with men whose livelihood depends on the uses they make of the opportunities for education, he must expect to be left very far behind. But when he has no profession, and therefore has the most difficult task of all so far as living a decent life is concerned, then it is that the disastrous effects of his training are shown up to the full.

A large proportion of the upper class now shrink from public service. If they must have occupation, let it be in money-making. They do not want to be bothered with the numberless complex problems of the day, and where in daily life such subjects are forced to their notice they manage to laugh them off so as to avoid discussion.

It may well be said that there ought to be no such thing as a man without a profession or some serious occupation, and that an establishment which could teach a man to lead an idle life that was fruitful and beneficial to himself and his fellows would have to be something very abnormal. This can certainly be admitted, and boys might so be trained that in spite of all the

temptations of money and opportunity the idea of doing nothing would be so abhorrent to them as to be impossible. On the contrary, however, their appetite to do nothing is whetted, and their fellows regard them as favoured by fortune. Just a little smattering is supposed to suffice as education, because the task they have before them is considered the lightest of all.

Sometimes the gentleman who has command of both leisure and money is seized by a pathetic desire in after-life to *do* something. One of the smatterings may have produced appreciation, and appreciation in its turn ambition. He will look about for short cuts. But they are being closed up. The main road is crowded, and he naturally hesitates to match his halting paces with the swift feet of the properly trained. In the creative world his attempts to make short cuts lead him hopelessly astray. A pursuit is taken up suddenly with great zeal, and there is impatience and despair at its failure. With feverish eagerness the desire grows to act the part of a scholar, an artist, a musician, a *littérateur,* a handicraftsman, without any of the experience of his laborious days, months, and years of pains and preparation that go to make up the professional. His achievements are judged by a different measure. The privileges rank or means may give him forfeit his right to be judged by a professional standard. Allowance is made for what critics accept as a sort of natural handicap; "not bad for a

man in his position." "Quite good considering . . ." This is humiliating for the conscientious gentleman, who at such times deeply resents his want of training and the system which binds him to mediocrity. Some ladies and gentlemen are capable of and eager for service, but they are hopelessly and unfairly restricted. They have to submit to be classed with the rest, whose ideal is either blank or one of the privileged domination, and with them to stand condemned.

When will people have the sense to realise that a life without obligatory occupation or absorbing interest is by far the most difficult sort of life to manage? It is full of snares and pitfalls, dangers to self, dangers to others, risks of stagnation, of satiety, of futility, of worthlessness, the breeding of vapidity, barrenness and narrowness of character, and the setting of a most harmful though outwardly attractive example. It has been well said that "the leisured class canon demands strict and comprehensive futility; the instinct of workmanship demands purposeful action." * The mania for unceasing amusement defeats its own object. The depression caused by an endless round of pleasure-seeking is the most desperate form of depression that exists. A child who scrapes up enough pocket-money to buy a box of chocolates gets untold pleasure from it. A child who is provided with enough pocket-money to buy ten boxes

* T. Veblen, "Theory of a Leisured Class."

of chocolates instead of getting ten times as much pleasure gets considerably less.

There is a good deal of talk about engendering class hatred whenever the mildest criticism is levelled against the upper class. The well-paid worker has no feelings of jealousy against leisured gentlemen. The worker is in an infinitely superior position, and has every reason to be proud of the share he takes in national life. But when workers find their livelihood imperilled by influences which they can trace to the action or inaction of a parasitic class, they naturally enough begin to question the very existence of such a class. They alone are blamed, but the true cause of their very often ill-expressed indignation should be sought in the right place.

No man who had received anything like a real training, whose faculties had been sharpened, and whose imagination had been quickened, would consent to lead a life of idleness. Leisure in itself is most valuable. No one would grudge a man leisure, and there are some millions who could do with a little more. In fact, one of the chief functions of education should be to teach people how to employ their leisure by opening their minds to varied interests. This is as important with the rich as with the poor. It is only those who have received, either at home or away from home, an education that is fertilising and not sterilising who know how to use, enjoy, and profit by their leisure.

But unlimited leisure is unmanageable. Con-

stant idleness must produce cerebral deterioration or mental debility.* A life devoted to leisure is profitless, and a class devoted to a life of leisure is the cause of much waste and distress. When men become a burden on the community, the economic problem that arises is equally serious whatever their social status may be. The terms of contumely applied to the wastrels of the industrial army can be applied with equal relevance and fairness to the ill-trained upper class idler. He may never reach the crisis of starvation which confronts his unemployable pauper brother. But as a damaging element in the community he has more influence, and is therefore a greater danger. He can be described equally well as "slag and unmarketable refuse," "waste

* "As regards the degree of mental and physical resemblance there is between those who compose the various 'classes,' recent investigations have contributed valuable information. Between the 'working-man' and a member of the 'middle class,' the latter and the 'gentleman,' the separating spaces are almost equal. The physical development of the first is far greater than that of the second, and the brain of the 'middle class' man is of a considerably higher order than that of the third. At what particular time in the process of evolution occurred, and to what cause or combination of causes can be attributed, the arrest of mental and physical development in the 'gentleman' has not yet been ascertained. It would appear, however, that in perfecting the race evolution is casting out the mentally and physically deficient—the 'gentleman'—a not complimentary conclusion which Science, who is no respecter of persons, is being irresistibly forced to adopt" (from the Presidential Address delivered in March, 1911, at the annual meeting of the Royal Society for Evolutionary Research).

product of society," and "shirker," and he, too, suffers from "defective training." * But there is this difference, that with his advantages he has far less excuse, and he is not driven by any economic pressure. And yet, when we come to think of it, scattered over the country carelessly enjoying themselves, utterly idle, uneducated, contributing nothing and wasting the substance which they hold as a trust, there are, relatively to the size of their class, a larger number of rich non-effectives than there are pauper incorrigibles.

Ill-regulated and excessive leisure is one of the prime factors in straining to breaking-point the marriage tie. The relationship between a woman with no household duties and a man at home without any profession, however much they may plunge into the whirlpool of sport and amusement, is bound to be difficult. But take a poll in our large Public Schools, and you would find that a life of complete leisure is the ideal of nine boys out of ten, and so little are they taught of the interests of life and the obligations of manhood that they can go through their ten years' course without being disillusioned.

Men without occupation have the *naïveté* and childishness of arrested growth. They have no notion what work means, though some of them by native intuition may succeed in cutting away some of the fetters their training has imposed on them. What many gentlemen call their

* See leading article in *The Times*, April 15, 1912, "The Non-effectives in the Industrial Army."

"work" is very often like the lady's embroidery. She has a design copied, she stitches a few coloured threads in moments of zeal, and sends the toilsome part to be finished by the students of the school of art, and then calls it, with a sigh of exhaustion, "my winter's work!"

Many a gentleman's life is thus spent, subject to the natural pains and sorrows from which no human being is immune, but without any experience of the sting of effort, without having felt the pull of the stream because they have always drifted with it. No career could be more profitless and barren. They are gentlemen, no doubt. They may have nice feelings and pleasant manners, but that is not enough. The very few in this class whose natural talents, outstanding ability or strength of character safeguard them from the ill-effects of their training and give them the requisite impetus to eschew the indolence produced by their surroundings will in all probability come to the front. But in the creative world, to be by birth and education what is described as an aristocrat is almost an absolute barrier to first-class achievement. It can be repeated again that the characteristics of a gentleman without any further backing and without any substantial support are practically valueless.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FUTURE

Cause of decline of aristocracy—The aristocrat's position to-day—His supposed advantages—Improvements in habits—The amateur—Treatment of women—School-training the weakest point—The dangers of plutocracy—Arbitrary nature of social divisions—The fostering of individuality—Necessity for aristocracy to face the facts.

The rise of democracy necessarily entails the decline of aristocracy. But inasmuch as the rule of the people means the co-operation of all classes, it is of importance in the general regulations of society to understand whither that class is drifting which once held undisputed sway. It is also desirable to ascertain to what extent in this weakness and decline they constitute a danger to the community as well as to themselves. Incidentally too it is relevant to trace a future course which they may follow and a new method they may adopt, in order to enrol themselves as useful participants in a more perfectly constituted democratic state.

No one can claim that the position of the governing class, even during the last hundred years, has not materially changed. No one can

contend that the leisured gentleman of to-day is a highly educated and indispensable member of the community. No one, therefore, should object to criticism being levelled at the weakest points in his training and a warning being given as to the dangers that are in prospect. Even in his altered circumstances the aristocrat is being grossly deceived, for he is made to believe that he is given a better chance than other people.

It would be foolish to protest against any one being accorded special advantages if these advantages were real, to withhold preferential treatment if that treatment made him happier, or to deny him separate educational facilities if the facilities were genuinely superior. This might be an ideal method of producing supermen, but such opportunities would have to be open to every one. The spirit of the age, however, is dispelling all these fallacies, and the turn of the aristocrat has come for a correct valuation. The investigation is discouraging. It is to be deplored, considering the practically unlimited nature of human capabilities, that artificial agencies should be allowed to operate in such a manner as to damp down the fire of initiative and choke the rising spring of self-realisation, thereby greatly limiting the total output of human accomplishment. We are often shown how this happens with the poor, but few are alive to the fact that it happens just as much with gentlemen, though from other causes which are more easily curable.

Who is to blame? The vast number of influences at work make any apportionment of responsibility out of the question. But as education is of paramount importance those who are responsible for its organisation and management, and those who accept as training what is obviously inferior instead of the best possible, lay themselves open to severe censure.

In the world as we find it to-day the spirit of altruism is far more widely spread than people are inclined to believe. Mutual aid, compassion, and eagerness for service amount almost to human instincts. General knowledge and the increased solidarity of mankind have stimulated these instincts. But lack of opportunity, bewilderment from the oppression of mechanical civilisation, stunted capacity and submission to the bondage of custom prevent the active operation of the finer human feelings.

The gentleman of the upper class is no exception. He is showing in some cases that in so far as he has initiative and control he is prepared for service, eager and willing to do what he can. Although as a marksman he is clumsy because the weapon he is given is antiquated and inadequate, his aim may be true enough. If many are thoughtless and self-indulgent, to a very large extent it is their training at home and at school that is at fault. By some, however, an effort is being made to rise to the height of their responsibilities, to substitute a higher ideal for the conventional level, and so

with the influences they find in their possession to reach a truer standard of enlightenment and utility. For these there is no need to be pessimistic with regard to the future. If only they could instil into a majority of their fellow aristocrats the same realisation of having arrived at a critical juncture which requires an entire readjustment of their point of view and a complete resignation of all pretensions of superiority, the whole caste might be relieved from the suspicion of decadence.

The symptoms of deterioration have been enlarged upon, but there are signs of improvement as well. The stream of progress has been broad enough to leave its mark on a class which can no longer be as exclusive and aloof as was formerly possible. It is a noteworthy fact that the younger generation are showing an abstemiousness which was unknown to their ancestors. The debauchery of the eighteenth century and the fashionable drunkenness of the nineteenth are coming to be looked upon as discarded customs of the past. In a concourse of young men even in the Army and Universities it is not unusual to find a number of abstainers. At the same time humanitarian views, though still despised in some quarters, have made immense strides, and brutality and disregard of physical suffering are rare.

In the upper class, although attainments in learning and letters have fallen off, and although millionaire collectors have taken the place of

the great patrons of art, the average of taste and appreciation in art and literature is certainly higher than formerly. The much condemned amateur spirit, which in business matters spells inefficiency, may in art, music, and literature be taken in a different sense to mean the recognition and love of the beautiful. A large number of people who are capable of appreciating and criticising works of art, the performance and writing of music, or thought and imagination in literature, is in some ways preferable to a very small number who greatly excel as exponents, while the vast majority remain utterly ignorant. This form of artistic perception exists in the upper class, but it is largely discounted by the craving of smart society to vitiate the standard of true excellence by rapturous enthusiasm over the second-rate. So long as the æsthetic sense consists in nothing more than instinctive good taste for decoration and furniture, or an eye for colour and outline, it may be proportionately more widespread in the upper class than elsewhere. Their surroundings help them. But the moment the æsthetic sense requires to be supplemented by mental effort and intellectual discrimination it must be sought elsewhere. It is in provincial towns, where leisured aristocrats are non-existent, that the best music or drama or literature is justly valued and warmly welcomed with real intelligence and artistic sympathy.

Enough has been said about manners to show

that, pleasant as they may be, too much importance should not be attached to them, and fear has been expressed that the characteristics which accompanied the courtliness of the past are disappearing. Nevertheless the gentleman in this class does still show a deferential consideration for women, which he may claim as a characteristic to his credit. He treats a woman as an equal to whom at the same time a certain amount of chivalrous attention is due. His leisured life and absence of serious professional work make him more on an intellectual level with the women of his class, who in their turn can utilise their leisure to reach a rather higher plane of intellectual cultivation than many of their sisters in other classes who are more busily engaged. The relationship thus established is the direct contrary to what prevails, for instance, in Germany, where the custom of dissociating women entirely from male interests makes them occupy socially a different level to men. But it is chiefly a question of manners and has nothing whatever to do with morals. The gentleman's treatment of women, though superficially graceful and deferential, does not affect the essentials of sex relationship, which are, taking them as a whole, more unsatisfactory in the highest and lowest classes than elsewhere.

In making a study of the aristocrat one is apt so often to find that the defects of his virtues more than counterbalance the virtues themselves. This much, however, may be fairly conceded.

If the choice for a post of some responsibility entailing the management of men rested between an ill-trained gentleman and an equally ill-trained man of any other class, it would certainly be wise to select the gentleman, even when an aristocrat. This is paying a high tribute to his peculiar qualities, and the only way we can find of doing so without reserve or qualification.

In our general survey home training, and more particularly school training, have been exposed as the weakest spots. But the school, which has so strong an influence over the home and over the subsequent years of the boy's career, is, after all, an institution capable of being radically reformed. A dissolution of Public Schools cannot be looked for, but it may be hoped that the example of some of the quite modern institutions which are doing pioneer work may gradually be followed. Without any sweeping change a great deal could be done by the acceptance of a system which included some of the following alterations: reduced numbers, more masters, smaller classes, lower fees, greater elasticity of curriculum, the mitigation of the examination system, the abolition of meaningless competitions and prizes, more attention paid to character development than to capacity to store information, and at the back of everything the teaching of the spirit of religion instead of dogmatic theology. More than this of course is wanted. But when the hide-bound views of prominent head masters and the timidity of parents are con-

sidered even these reforms seem outside the bounds of possibility. In this direction, therefore, no one can claim that the prospect is hopeful.

The aristocrat seems to have come to a parting of the ways, and the choice that confronts him is tempting but perilous. Is he going to fall a victim to the insinuating allurements of riches? However discouraging some of the signs of the times may be, it is sincerely to be hoped that if he retains anything of his former distinction and good taste, he will not. So extreme, in many instances, has the impulse for extravagant and luxurious living become, so patently vulgar is the ostentation that accompanies it, so inimical to happiness is the course it takes, and so obvious is the waste that ensues, that it is not inconceivable that a reaction—even a fashionable reaction—against this craving may take place in the not very distant future. The lust for power has in all ages infected certain men, tyrants, princes, statesmen, or conquerors. The modern equivalent of these is the financier. "For it is Power not wealth or comfort at which they aim: and in pursuit of that aim they trample under foot all law and all morality. As the ancient tyrant or the mediæval baron robbed so do they: only where he stole lands and castles and material goods, they steal the symbols of these things, securities and cash." *

The advent of a plutocracy we devoutly hope

* "Justice and Liberty," G. Lowes Dickinson.

is only a nightmare. Nevertheless, the manipulating of interests, the juggling in the money market, the mania for speculation, the creation of false money standards, the international syndicates of financial adventurers to which Governments become a prey, the control of the Press, the ostentatious benevolence of millionaires and the brutalising effect of the pursuit of wealth give us a foretaste of the kind of calamity it would mean. What is called the gentleman of good family, almost more than any one else, can help to prevent this if he will only step out from the rut, throw aside his easy-going blasé callousness, side with his fellow-men and not sell his soul for a five-figure income. If he is a gentleman still he will endeavour to head back this hideous incursion, if he does not it is because he has ceased to be a gentleman.

With all their faults, the Press and the literature of the day do serve to bring to the notice of rich and poor alike some of the facts and stern realities concerning the condition of the people. Men, whatever their education may be, cannot any longer live through their lives without coming up against circumstances and events which give them an insight into the economic and social condition of those who live outside their own world. The belief that each section of the community is independent, and can develop along its own lines and need only concern itself with its own problems is for ever abandoned. Our civilisation is a highly complex arrangement.

Those who try to live within a ringed fence and shut their eyes and stop their ears to what takes place outside are refusing to take their part in the general struggle and strife, by which alone human life can be refreshed and made vigorous. Society is an organic whole—the threads of human relationship are inextricably intertwined. Any section that deliberately stands apart and confines its restricted energies to purely selfish ends must inevitably perish in the long run. There can only be combatants and no spectators in the battle of life.

The service rendered by the aristocracy in the past has been very much overrated, but they held the reins of power undisturbed. The day of their political dominance has passed, though their social dominance still remains. The elimination of class distinctions cannot yet, unfortunately, be regarded as practicable. But the differences in social strata which are changing and ephemeral are comparatively unimportant; whereas the common kinship of humanity is a fundamental principle that requires to be more fully recognised. From this basis first emerge the natural differences of genius, talent, character, imagination, and physique; and upon those distinctions can be built further by human ingenuity devices to fortify and protect the frail and weak and to encourage and guide the strong. But the present arrangement of society, from which we all suffer, and yet to which we tamely submit, is the immediate cause of many of the social evils that exist.

It is based on the imposition of an elaborate system of mechanical, arbitrary, unnatural qualifications by which society is cut up according to low and senseless standards of money, property, so-called birth, and titles, and its defence rests on the declaration that all this is inevitable and unalterable because it is the handiwork of Providence. The desire to adhere to the maintenance of the present artificial social order can only come from ignorance or the purely selfish fear that change may make those who are comfortable uncomfortable. But it is quite idle to stand up against the process of organic evolution. A few little mites of beings are not going to direct the course of an inexorable law. That law is guided and finds the energy for its enforcement in the sum-total of noble, spiritual aspirations, which throughout humanity at large are striving to find expression. Its tendency, even in the cramped scope in which it works in the upper class, is to insist in each succeeding era, consequent on changes and in spite of obstacles, on the organisation of society on a basis of social justice.

When the causes of industrial unrest are being anxiously sought, it is well to remember that the seat of the mischief may not lie entirely in the classes that are manifestly suffering from straitened conditions. Those who have abundance and those who by their privileged circumstances are freed from the stress of toil may, by their reluctance to render adequate service or by their ignorance and incapacity to interpret

their social obligations, be contributing in no small degree to economic dislocation and sowing the seeds of strife.

Among the best types, whatever their status, there is no very great difference of aim. The true gentleman should be a democrat because his acutely developed feelings of consideration for others would make him desire to place any advantages he may naturally possess at their service, and would make him ready to yield to their governance when he recognises their better judgment or finer skill. The true democrat has something of the aristocrat in him, because, while reposing absolute confidence in the people, he would know that the supervision of a few who are selected for their proficiency is necessary to give the best chance to the true enunciation of democratic opinion ; and he would also know that even when all men have an equal chance, excellence of character and superior ability must rise to the surface. This, indeed, and not a dead level of mediocrity or a drab uniformity is his ideal. The two, therefore, can work together so long as there is no class pride or self-interest. The aristocrat having renounced all desire to govern by favour and having expressed his intention to serve with the rest may be welcomed in the ranks by reason of his personal character and individual efficiency, but not because he is a superior person. His services may be of inestimable value. His mere presence may be an encumbrance. The choice rests with him.

In spite of the worst features in any type,

be it the most arrogant, supercilious, and ignorant aristocrat or the most embittered and unscrupulous plebeian, deep down beneath the ugly crust for which a relentless heredity and the overwhelming force of circumstances are no doubt chiefly responsible will inevitably be found some pure gems of natural origin and real worth. Any one with faith in human nature knows that though they may not be visible, these gems exist, and the hope of future betterment rests on their being uncovered and placed in their proper setting. If motives and action were based more often on individual conviction than on the lazy acceptance of tradition, or the persuasive force of artificially organised opinion, the moral energy of progress would be greatly strengthened.

The fostering of individuality, of initiative, of self-reliance, the more natural development of the mind and the more rational development of morals should be insisted on in all classes and in every generation. This is hardly a truism, for so many are still accustomed to take their social, religious, and political faith ready-made from text-books, and rest their shallow judgments on momentary expediency without the aid of deep conviction, which can only come from self-realisation. Men require to recognise the importance of their own individuality and the essential desirability of making spontaneous and unaided decisions. The stereotyping and stamping process imposed by Public School training, which has been commented on in a previous chapter, is the chief agency for pre-

venting the upper class gentleman from being aware of his own powers in this respect, and creates the necessity for his having to exercise an undue amount of moral courage to strike out an original line. Having been brought up in blinkers, he is afraid to take a broad view lest he should become giddy and lose his footing. On the other hand, the growth in all classes of a social consciousness and the habit of envisaging every problem with a larger focus will tend towards the acquisition of a truer sense of value and proportion, and will prevent the too easy acceptance of the cheap philosophy of so-called worldly wisdom. Aristocrats have to fight against more rigid conventions and more deeply ingrained mental inertia than perhaps any other class. They require, therefore, to be more rudely disturbed and more roughly shaken from their moral lassitude. Struggle is the price of progress. But most of them hate struggle, and are indifferent about progress, which seems to involve their own transformation.

Whatever good characteristics may be possessed by the aristocrat they are not the outcome of his blood and breeding or even of his environment. The sheltered position held by the governing class in the past, and the fact of their never having tasted the bitterness of the struggle for life, may have produced certain pleasant qualities as well as defects. But such qualities cannot be reproduced now in a society that has so completely altered. However much they may desire it there can be no return to the

old order, even though reactions in their favour may occur in the future.

Regarding the prospects from their own point of view, their best chance lies in facing the facts and in a frank avowal that in no way are they better suited than any one else to govern the country or dominate society. They are just as good as other men and just as bad, but neither better nor worse. What makes them different is that the aristocracy now is in an entirely false position. Of course they do not take this view themselves, and when they can add talent to the charming patronage they know so well how to wield, they can still prevent a large number of their fellow-countrymen from seeing their position in its true perspective. But hard, plain, and no doubt disagreeable facts are making it ever more difficult for them to keep up the illusion.

It is his social power to which the aristocrat still clings. But he is masquerading in the costume of his ancestors, and he is not nearly so ornamental. A "make-up" at best can only be a very tawdry imitation of what was once real. If he will cast off his disguise, the man underneath can emerge unencumbered by the trappings of past glories—free, natural, independent, boldly refusing to be bound by stale conventions, shackled by discredited traditions, or entangled in frivolous customs. It is not the aristocrat, but the man, who is wanted, inasmuch as all hands are wanted for the unending work there is to be done.

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